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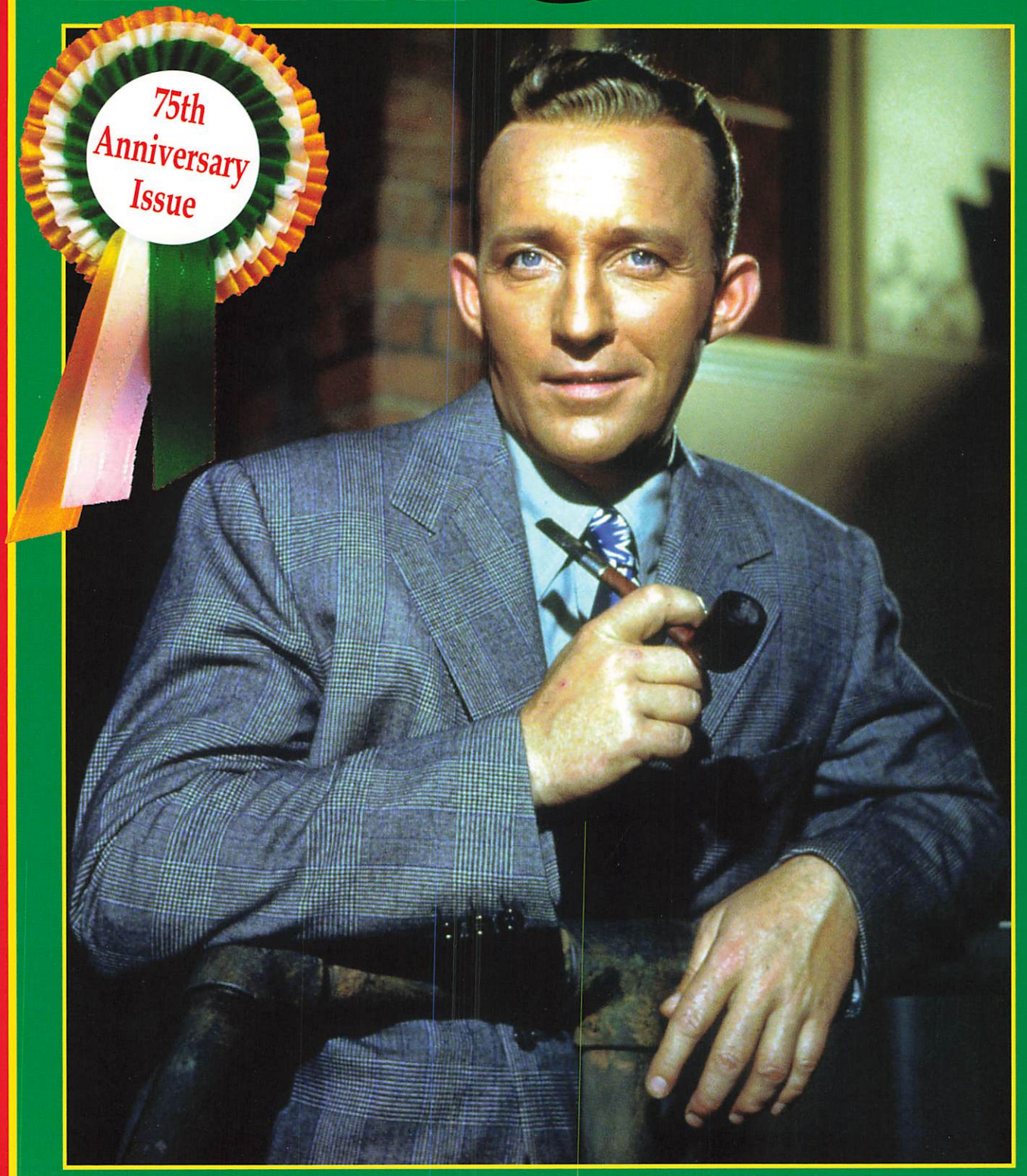

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

Founded in 1936, the world's longest-running fan club - as recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records

OUR MISSION: To perpetuate the memory and the musical legacy of Bing Crosby for the benefit of future generations

Web sites:
Club: www.club-crosby.org
Bing Crosby Enterprises: www.BingCrosby.com
BING magazine: www.bingmagazine.co.uk
Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Bing-Crosby/44544738326

Honorary President: KATHRYN CROSBY
Honorary Members: Harry Crosby - Mary Crosby Brodka - Nathaniel Crosby - Phillip Crosby Jr. Ken Barnes - Pat Boone - Rory Burke - Michael Feinstein - Rich Little - Rich Little - Gia Prima - Andy Williams
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UK	£15 per annum
Mainland Europe, including Eire	£16 per annum
Australia and New Zealand	A$40 per annum
Rest of World	£18 per annum

All remittances should be sent to Michael Crampton in **£ sterling** payable to *The International Club Crosby* with the exception of::
(a) American and Canadian members who should send their remittances in U.S. dollars to F. B. Wiggins
(b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor or the American Co-Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

BING is the official journal of *The International Club Crosby* and is published in the spring, summer and winter of each year.

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EDITORIAL

It is with deep regret that we have to report that our Honorary President, Kathryn Crosby, was seriously injured in a car accident last November and her second husband, Bill Sullivan, was tragically killed. Further details can be found on a subsequent page.

****

Greetings to all of my fellow ICC members, and welcome to our diamond anniversary party! Amazing to think that the year has arrived when the International Club Crosby can boast 75 consecutive years as an organization and I'll be looking back at the origins of the U.S. Club Crosby in this issue. In addition, we have a very special audio CD we'll be offering exclusively to our members, details of which can be found elsewhere in this magazine.

In the process of looking back at where we've come from, I received the sad news that my former colleague and editor of BINGANG magazine from the mid 1980's through the Club Crosby merger with the ICC in 2003, Wayne Martin, had suffered a stroke this past May and it has affected both his memory and his mobility. I'm sure you'll all join me in sending good thoughts to Wayne and his family during this challenging time for them.

On January 18, I had the pleasure of setting up a public Bing Crosby display as part of an event called "Collection of Collectors" that was hosted by the local Washington County Historical Society. The event took place in a former courtroom that has now been converted to a museum. The building dates back to 1889, where it served as West Bend's circuit courthouse until 1962. In addition to the 8 foot long table of Crosby memorabilia I had on display, I also had an ICC membership recruitment display, with information about our organization and membership applications. During the ninety-minute event, there was a steady stream of people surrounding my table, with so many stopping to ask questions and share their memories of Bing. It was gratifying to see so much interest him, and to see so many people taking membership forms along with them. Hopefully the publicity generated will garner us at least a few more members.

Elsewhere in this issue, Ken Crossland takes note of the new Bing Crosby Archive CD and DVD releases through Collectors' Choice Music, as we look forward to more such releases of rare material from them in the near future. 2011 is off to a grand start, and it is indeed an exciting time not just for the ICC, but for Bing Crosby aficionados in general!

Greg Van Beek

There has indeed been a lot happening since our last issue. We have reports on a major Crosby event in Los Angeles, a Bing Crosby Holiday Film Festival in Spokane and the long-awaited showing of the 1960 baseball film in Pittsburgh. There is news of a most important donation of recordings by Universal Music Group to the Library of Congress. Interesting information is supplied about Bing's albums "Hey Jude, Hey Bing" and "The Great Country Hits" and a Frank Capra season in London has encouraged us to look again at the two films Bing made with Capra.

The Bing 'N' Bowie duet seems to gather as much publicity for Bing as almost anything else nowadays and it has spawned two different adaptations in recent months as you will read in a subsequent page.

Bing's niece, Carolyn Schneider, continues to be busy publicising her uncle and there have been a number of significant radio interviews featuring Mary Crosby Brodka, Robert Bader, Gary Giddins and Ken Crossland.

It is very pleasing to note the plethora of Crosby movies which have been seen in the USA and the UK in recent months. The arrival of *White Christmas* on Blu-ray has been widely welcomed and you will read in an expanded "Keeping Track" of new albums being made available solely as downloads. We have come a long way since our formation 75 years ago when all we had to concern ourselves with was our 78s!

We are sorry to report that both Bing Crosby's Restaurant and Redmond Nostalgia have ceased trading and further background is supplied later in this issue.

Our 75th anniversary is a very noteworthy achievement of which we are very proud and it is only right to celebrate. However, it is also appropriate to sound a note of caution for the future. Our membership is slowly declining and in February Wig had to chase over 70 of our members who had failed to renew on time. Age and death are contributing factors of course but if members have other reasons for not renewing please tell us so that we can react accordingly.

Malcolm Macfarlane

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SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

2010 proved to be bountiful year for Bing Crosby enthusiasts with BCE and Universal issuing an extensive catalogue of much sought after titles and films. Bing Crosby Enterprises continue to surprise and delight, with more excellent material promised for 2011.

Universal's new box set contains a treasure trove of early Bing and the quality is astounding considering the age of this material. Wig Wiggins has advised the team responsible for this set, about the remaining 15 films which have not yet been issued on DVD. If such a set were to be issued we might then enjoy such films as *The Star Maker, Dixie, Top O' the Morning, Two for Tonight* and *Going Hollywood*, all long sought after in excellent quality.

Most members have responded positively to my appeal for their subscriptions to be paid on time and many have been very generous with extra financial support. We owe much to those from whose yearly generosity we all benefit. At the time of writing though (February 23), I still need a response from around 30 members and Wig is waiting to hear from about 70 members who have not renewed. We hope that they will ultimately decide to remain with us, despite difficult financial times.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members of ICC with a wish that their involvement with the club will bring them interest and enjoyment as they interact with their fellow Bing enthusiasts.

UNITED STATES

It is a special pleasure to welcome Maria Ferrer Murdock, Rosemary Clooney's daughter, who is joined by her fellow citizens: Bill Galletta (Merrick, New York), Anthony Meade (Santa Ana, California), Ellen Robey (Spokane, Washington), William Boyle (Stratford, Connecticut), Emily Champin (Naperville, Illinois), Frank King (Brooklyn, New York) and Stan Leyland (New York, New York),

UNITED KINGDOM

Stan Mayor (Cheadle, Cheshire), Scot Hart (Edinburgh), Frank Thompson (Wavertree, Liverpool), Mrs. J S McCullock (Canterbury, Kent), Michael Portley (Northampton) and Gary Paylor (Whitby, North Yorkshire)

DONATIONS

We gratefully acknowledge the additional financial support provided by the following members –

USA: Scott Ables, Tom Chevrette, James Clifford, Don Cretella, Howard Crosby, Milton Cummings, David Currie, Stanley Diebel, Anthony DiFlorio, Laurence Doyle, Joseph Duncan, Helen Feiereisen, Mike Ferruzza Ron Field, Dick Heman, Sean Joyce, Laurence Kieran, Albert Koenig, Marcie Kukla, Stanley Lebby, Joyce Lundberg, Paul Murphy, Al O'Hagan, Dolores Onorato, Dave Richards, Rev Eugene Roberts, Robert Stagnaro, Robert Stratiff, Charles Townsend, Greg Van Beek, Charles Van Riper, Charles Vincent, Norman Wolfe

Canada: Done Roegele, Britton Smith

UK, Ireland & Europe: Jean Rainey, John Davis, Paul Hennessy, Michael Collins, Frank Startup, Donald Bostock, John Salisbury and Ken Shaw who have gifted very generous sums to support the ICC and they are joined in their magnanimity by: Dennis Newton, Bill Green, Doreen Hubbard, Maggie Ryan, Ronald Moss, Nico v d Seijp, Frank Challenger, Nick Carter, Mr J. Cook, Stan Herrett, Robert Larkin, John McNicholas,

Edgar Lawson, George Patmore, Nicholas Morrison, Bert Bishop, Vera Campbell, Jim Byrne, J M Byrd, John Bignell, Roy Irvine, Des Hellier, Dermot Tallon, Barbara Holmes, Klaus Halm, Chris Hitchcock, John Stiles, Derek Meaden, Christine Mann, Alf Plummer, Michael Reynolds, Matthew Sprott, Maurice Heywood, Margaret North, Dennis Saville, Sylvia Lawrence, Elizabeth Gregory, Trevor Wagstaff, Michael Tyce, Jim Reilly, Sylvia Lawrence, Peter Howard, Mike O'Donaghue, Geoffrey Robinson, Ron Field, Harry C. Ross, Mr R. E. Sharpe, Ron Holder, Arthur Blood, Tom Sim, Jack Winegrad, June Manton, Danny Flies, Stan Woodford, Lew Grasby, Margaret North, Colin Stewart, Eddie McGinley, Thomas Hirschmann, Anna Monaghan and Frank Brannigan.

We are very fortunate to have such keen and committed members and we thank our benefactors for their continuing support. Gestures like these make it all worthwhile for the team that produces and distributes the magazine. If we inadvertently fail to mention any donations, please tell us and we will make good in the next issue of BING.

DEATHS

It is with much sadness that we draw members' attention to the passing of the following members –
Les Street (Mynachdy, Cardiff), **Alan Sutcliffe** (Halifax, West Yorkshire) and **Kenneth Pritchard** (Solihull, West Midlands)

We extend our sincere condolences to the family and friends of the above members.

BING CROSBY – THROUGH THE YEARS – Vols. 1 to 6 (Sepia Records)

These attractive CDs remain available from me with the price for the UK being £6.50 and the price for Europe £7.00. Members in the US & Canada should obtain their copies from Wig Wiggins and in Australia/New Zealand from David Currington. The price for members in the rest of the world is £8.

Volume 7 is now available so please order using the enclosed insert.

CROSBY CALENDAR 2011

The 2011 calendar sold out completely and as a consequence around 45 members regrettably missed out on obtaining their copy. Requests for the calendar had decreased over time and it was necessary to order less to keep costs within a reasonable margin. Going forward we need to establish numbers before we go to print so this will mean pre-ordering following the issue of the summer magazine. We will give details in our next issue.

LEEDS 2011 (46th meeting)

Sunday October 2nd 2011 is the date for your diary.

Until summer, my warmest greetings to all members.

Michael Crampton

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 12 MONTHS TO 31st DECEMBER 2010

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Subscriptions and donations	10548	Production of BING magazine	11091
Sales - Calendars	1896	Calendars	1620
Leeds meeting - receipts	607	AGM (Leeds) costs	670
Sales - Books / back issues	165	Secretarial costs	252
Sales - Sepia CDs	5421	Sepia CDs - costs	4679
Sales - Mosaic sets	1418	Mosaic sets - costs	1007
Sales - Woodbury / Jonzo CDs	30	Woodbury / Jonzo CDs costs	5
Sales - Carolyn Schneider books	206	Editorial costs	78
Ron Bosley tribute	40	Carolyn Schneider books	678
Bank Interest 2010	0	KMH CD costs	757
Bank balance 31/12/2009	10777	Postage - books/back issues	156
		Ron Bosley tribute	80
		Bank balance 31/12/2010	10035
	31108		31108

Note:
1. The accounts are a simple unaudited Income and Expenditure summary. Amounts owing and stocks of books and CDs held are not shown. Funds held on a temporary basis by the various international representatives are not shown either.
2. The cost of the 75th anniversary KMH CDs should be reimbursed from sales during 2011.
3. The club is able to cover its anticipated expenditure in 2011.

Michael Crampton. Secretary/Treasurer

KATHRYN CROSBY

In the heading to our editorial, we gave the sad news of the tragic car accident which killed Kathryn's second husband and left her seriously injured. The accident happened on November 4 and this is what the press coverage told us.

Maurice William Sullivan, 85, killed after striking boulder on U.S. 50 near Twin Bridges
Twin Bridges, California — November 4, 2010
Police say 85-year-old Genoa, Nevada resident Maurice William Sullivan was killed Thursday when he lost control along Highway 50 and struck a boulder. The California Highway Patrol reports that Mr. Sullivan was driving west on Highway 50, west of Wrights Lake Road, when he veered off the roadway and was ejected when the car struck a large boulder. He was pronounced dead a short time later. A female passenger, 76, also from Genoa, was transported to Renown Regional Medical Center in Reno for treatment of reportedly serious injuries. The crash remains under investigation.

The news that Kathryn was the "female passenger" did not break until December 2 and naturally the ICC was quick to send condolences to Kathryn for her sad loss and to wish her a speedy recovery from her injuries. The latest news is that Kathryn is doing very well, surprising her doctors and surgeons. She is at one of her homes, with a part-time nurse, and has started receiving 'guests'. Her friends are visiting in order to play cards with her, and she's quite excited at how well 2010 turned out for Bing Crosby Enterprises as the Bing/Bowie duet on iTunes was downloaded tens of thousands of times. She's also getting back involved in planning the 2011 BCE activities, including a very revamped website. So, the 'old' Kathryn is starting to roar back!

Library of Congress Gets a Mile of Music

The New York Times of January 9 had an amazing announcement!

The Library of Congress has begun taking possession of a huge donation of recordings, some 200,000 metal, glass and lacquer master discs from the period 1926 to 1948 that have been languishing in the subterranean vaults of Universal Music Group, the largest music conglomerate in the United States.

The bequest contains music representing every major genre of American popular song of that era — jazz, blues, country and the smooth pop of the pre-rock-'n'-roll period — as well as some light classical and spoken-word selections. One historic highlight is the master recording of Bing Crosby's 1947 version of "White Christmas," which according to Guinness World Records is the best-selling single of all time.

"This is a treasure trove, a mile-plus of material on the shelves, much of it music that has been out of circulation for many years," said Gene DeAnna, head of the recorded sound section of the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division of the Library of Congress. "You can't get any better copies than these, so this represents a major upgrade."

Under the agreement negotiated during discussions that began two years ago, the Library of Congress has been granted ownership of the physical discs and plans to preserve and digitize them. But Universal, a subsidiary of the French media conglomerate Vivendi that was formerly known as the Music Corporation of America, or MCA, retains both the copyright to the music recorded on the discs and the right to commercialize that music after it has been digitized.

"The thinking behind this is that we have a very complementary relationship," said Vinnie Freda, executive vice president for digital logistics and business services at Universal Music Logistics. "I've been trying to figure out a way to economically preserve these masters in a digital format, and the library is interested in making historically important material available. So they will preserve the physical masters for us and make them available to academics and anyone who goes to the library, and Universal retains the right to commercially exploit the masters."

The agreement will also permit the Web site of the Library of Congress to stream some of the recordings for listeners around the world once they are cataloged and digitized, a process that Mr. DeAnna said could take five years or more, depending on government appropriations. But both sides said it had not yet been determined which songs would be made available, a process that could be complicated by Universal's plans to sell some of the digitized material through iTunes.

...Michael Cuscuna, the jazz record producer and historian who runs Mosaic Records, a label specializing in jazz reissues, said of the Universal donation, "This is very crucial material for us, and we've been assured it will be an active archive that is not going to be tied up in bureaucracy, and that we and others will have access to it."

"Having lived in the vaults for many years," he added, he is aware that "there has been a lot of attrition" to the archives of major labels because of "stupid decisions, acts of nature, and material that has been lost, stolen, or never saved," so a transfer to the Library of Congress is theoretically welcome.

Much of the material has been stored at Iron Mountain, the former limestone mine near Boyers, Pa., that also holds numerous government and corporate records. Universal began delivering the material to a Library of Congress site in Culpepper, Va., just before Christmas, so it is still too early for archivists to know

what historic recordings, rarities and curiosities may be lurking in the collection. But a quick look at the lacquer recordings, which are being examined first because they are the most vulnerable, has already given hints of the riches that might be there.

Many of the lacquer discs appear to be backup recordings of studio sessions, including the chatter of performers and producers between takes. "Certainly there are many, many takes, 8 to 10, of some songs," Mr. DeAnna said, "so that you can track the decisions made in the studio and get some sense of what they were deciding, the criteria they were using" to determine how a song should sound.

One such sequence of studio recordings has Bing Crosby instructing backing musicians and singers how he wants to shape a song. Other discs feature Crosby and the guitarist Les Paul. Mr. DeAnna said there was even one session, which would have to be from the 1950s, of Crosby's encounter with the New York City doo-wop group the Jesters.

The Universal Music Group, today the largest group of labels in the beleaguered recording industry, began its life in 1934 as Decca Records, the American affiliate of the British recording company of the same name. Over the years as it was melded first into MCA and then Universal, it acquired or established subsidiary labels like Brunswick, Coral, Vocalion and Mercury, whose recordings from the era of 78 r.p.m. discs are also part of the archive.

... "We're hoping this is a long-term relationship that could span decades," Mr. Freda said. "If all goes well, our hope is to eventually deliver another tranche, maybe the 1950s and into the early 1960s, and cherry pick from that."

The exact monetary value of the collection is not known, and a formal assessment has not yet been made. But in addition to the savings that will be gained from no longer having to store the discs, Universal could be in line for a substantial tax write-off as a result of the donation.

"That's a complicated question for a lot of reasons," Mr. Freda said. "It's not a yes or no answer. Universal is a subsidiary of a much larger company, so it's got a lot of complications. But I can absolutely tell you that without a doubt that was not a consideration of why we did this. To the extent that we get a tax benefit, that will only be an extra plus."

Besides music by towering figures like Crosby, Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald and Judy Garland, the collection includes songs by stars like the Mills Brothers, Fred Waring, Guy Lombardo and the Andrews Sisters. For connoisseurs of American roots music, there is also country music from Ernest Tubb, bluegrass from Bill Monroe and a wide variety of guitar and piano blues, gospel and jug-band music.

"This is going to be the gift that keeps giving, that keeps our engineers and staff here busy for years," Mr. DeAnna said. "Our challenge right now is to decide where to start, because the sheer numbers are just staggering."

Larry Rohter

Editor: Tom Cole of NPR added more detail and some interesting comments.

...They'll be stored under a grass-covered hillside in Culpepper, Va., that once belonged to the Virginia Federal Reserve — built to house enough coin and currency to jump-start the economy east of the Mississippi in the event of a nuclear attack. Today it's the Packard (named after a donor) Campus of the National Audio-Visual Conservation Center. The Blue Ridge Mountains stand to the west and a red-tailed hawk circles overhead as Gene DeAnna, head of the Recorded Sound Section of the Library of Congress, leads the way inside.

In a room lined with shelves, where donations land for itemizing before they head to the vaults, an 8 by 10 sheet of paper marked simply "Universal Collection" hangs over a set of shelves. DeAnna pulls out a metal master of Louis Armstrong's recording of Fats Waller's "Ain't Misbehavin'." The florescent lights glare off the surface.

"So here's a Louis Armstrong 'Ain't Misbehavin" mother," DeAnna says proudly. "And when I say mother I mean metal recording, mother recording. It's actually a negative — press it into wax and you get the grooves."

It has ridges instead of grooves. The Library is waiting for a shipment of special styli that DeAnna calls "saddle styli," that can track these metal masters by riding on top of either side of the ridges the way a single stylus rides inside the grooves of a 78 rpm disc or an LP.

So far the Library has received about 50,000 metal masters — a tractor trailer load a week — since November.

"The majority of the [Universal] collection are the metal masters — about 200,000. Then there are going to be another 8 to 10,000 tape reels and probably twice that, maybe 15,000 lacquer discs," says DeAnna.

The lacquer discs were used to record in studios before the adoption of reel-to-reel tape. The final metal pressing masters were created from these lacquers.

It'll take about four months to get all of the material to Culpepper. Then DeAnna and a staff of 35 will begin the nuts and bolts work of figuring out what they've got; labelling it properly; deciding what needs immediate care and then digitizing it. The process will take years.

The negotiations and legal agreements took about two years to complete. DeAnna says Universal had been storing the discs and tapes at a commercial facility near Boyers, Penn. "They've been investing in a half a century of storage for some of this material and it hasn't been touched since it was first issued."

And that is basically why Universal wanted to unload it. The negotiations with the Library of Congress

began before a fire at Universal Studios in Hollywood damaged or destroyed film and video stored there. DeAnna says the Universal staff he dealt with seemed to have a sense that the clock was ticking.

"[They had a] commitment to getting this done and seeing this content doesn't get lost and doesn't get shuffled away in poor storage, say, because of an economic decision by a business office that's not in touch with the music," DeAnna says. "The people I've worked with are very in touch with the music and a sense of the history of the label ... [they have] a recognition that we need to take care of this because of an understanding of what the reality of the music industry really is and that it's important to get this done before it becomes a crisis."

Most of the collection is not worth Universal's time and money to even consider releasing to the general public.

"90% of what we're taking in here is not commercially viable materials. That is to go through the tremendous effort and time to remaster these materials to sell to a very, very small market. I don't think the record companies are able to sustain that market because the profit margins aren't what they need to be. In prior times, the profit margins didn't need to be so high; they didn't need to sell so many records."

In fact, the Library did a study that revealed that only 14% of the music recorded between the advent of recorded sound in the 1890s and 1960 is commercially available to the general public today.

The Library got the masters for Bing Crosby's 1947 Decca (a label now part of Universal) recording of "White Christmas." It was the second time Crosby recorded the song, says Robert Bamberger, a retired policy analyst for the Library of Congress and the co-author of a study last year on the state of audio preservation in the United States.

"The reason why Bing had to re-record it in 1947 is that the song sold so well that Decca was no longer able to strike copies from the 1942 master."

It wore out. So, even under the care of a label that has a financial interest in a recording, preservation is an issue, says Bamberger. He thinks Universal made the right decision to donate its masters to the Library.

"The best interests of preserving recorded sound heritage are served by relinquishing these master recordings and placing them where we can all exhale. Because we know that industry models come and go; corporations come and go. But we hope the Library of Congress will be forever."

For his part, the Library's DeAnna is most excited about what he *doesn't* know he's got.

"There's so much possibility here of discovery of recordings that really have just been off the sonic landscape of America for so long and important recordings, familiar sounds but long gone. It's just gonna be a treasure to mine for many years for the archive."

Universal retains the copyright to the recordings and, as is the case in most donations of this kind, will get digital copies of the Library's preservation work. The label's agreement with the Library of Congress allows for non-commercial streaming on the Library's website — a site the Library hopes to launch this spring. It's a collaboration with another major label — Sony-BMG — a project to be called the National Jukebox.

Tom Cole

(Editor: Mind-blowing! We await developments with interest.)

Bing Crosby's Restaurant Shuts Down

In BING #155 (Summer 2010), we reported the closure of the restaurant run by Dudum Sports and Entertainment in Rancho Mirage and we are very sorry to tell you that the company's flagship restaurant in Walnut Creek (near San Francisco) has closed too. My wife and I dined there some years ago and thought it was a wonderful venue with excellent food. The many photographs of Bing on display were a superb tribute to him.

The *San Francisco Chronicle* of January 3 carried this report.

> Dudum Sports and Entertainment pulled the plug on **Joe DiMaggio's** in North Beach in October, and now they've done the same to **Bing Crosby's** in Walnut Creek. The opulent 360-seat (!) piano bar and restaurant opened in 2004, out of a partnership between the Dudums and Kathryn Crosby. At the time, it spearheaded lots of talk about Walnut Creek's rejuvenated scene. Now, it's closed. For what it's worth, the numbers for the two other locations of Bing Crosby's - San Diego and Rancho Mirage - are disconnected. Not too far away in Walnut Creek, McCovey's Restaurant remains open, as of now. Calls to the Dudums have not yet been returned.

Martha Ross writing in the Walnut Creek Patch on January 2 had more to tell us.

Bing Crosby's Closed

One of Walnut Creek's hot spots has closed, apparently a victim of the economy's hit to fine dining.

Bing Crosby's Restaurant and Piano Lounge, which at one point was considered the hot spot in downtown Walnut Creek, has closed.

A relative of owner Jeff Dudum confirmed Saturday that the restaurant was closed and that those involved in running it enjoyed a farewell dinner on New Year's Eve. The relative cited the tough economic times that have shuttered a fair number of businesses and restaurants in Walnut Creek and beyond. I left a message for Jeff Dudum, and will update if I hear from him.

Several would-be customers and I stopped off at the nostalgia-themed restaurant in Broadway Plaza on Saturday evening. We found the doors locked. Peering into the windows, I could see that someone had pulled down framed photos from the walls, some of those possibly including the late crooner's memorabilia. A roll of bubble wrap was in view, ready to be used for packing.

The opening of Bing Crosby's in 2004 created a huge splash in the East Bay suburban dining scene. Dudum, a locally raised entertainment and real estate impresario opened the retro bar and restaurant that paid homage to singer and actor Bing Crosby--and all he supposedly represented in terms of style and mid-20th century cool.

Bing Crosby's, which Dudum opened in partnership with the late entertainer's widow, Kathryn Crosby, was an immediate hit. Dudum lured top East Bay chef Frank Palmer, formerly executive chef of the Lafayette Park Hotel's Duck Club, to design a menu that offered a mix of casual and fine dining and that emphasized classics such as Waldorf and Ceasar salads, shrimp cocktails, steaks, top-shelf burgers, and a selection of martinis.

Bing Crosby's went on to win accolades, such as a *Diablo* magazine Best of the East Bay distinction in 2006 as best new restaurant, hippest cocktail lounge, and best place for a girls night out. (With regard to the latter, I did hear that Bing Crosby's was the best spot in Walnut Creek for attractive older women-aka "cougars"-to socialize with younger men.)

Dudum's Sports and Entertainment Company opened in Walnut Creek, San Francisco and elsewhere across the western United States other sports- and celebrity-themed restaurants. In Walnut Creek, these eateries have included McCovey's (hailing San Francisco Giants legend Willie McCovey) and Maria Maria, a high-end Mexican restaurant inspired by musician Carlos Santana.

Dudum Sports and Entertainment's North Beach homage to Joe DiMaggio has not fared so well. *The San Francisco Chronicle* reports DiMaggio's had been struggling for about a year and recently closed. Dudum Sports and Entertainment CFO Rick Dudum told the Chronicle that business had dropped 50 percent since 2008.

"The fine dining business is tough nowadays," Rick Dudum told the Chronicle. "We tried our best and fought to keep it open for everyone."

But more recently, the Chronicle says that there have been "some issues" with DiMaggio's owners, Dudum Sports and Entertainment. Indeed, the San Francisco Sheriff's Department placed a notice on the door of Joe DiMaggio's, saying the business will be forcibly evicted Jan. 5.

Martha Ross

White Christmas (the classic album)

As we know, this CD is a re-release of Bing's classic "Merry Christmas" album and it was a thrill to note that as at December 6, the CD ranked as follows on Amazon.com

- Bestsellers in Pop Vocal Holiday Music (#1)
- Bestsellers in Classic Broadway Vocalists (#1)
- Bestsellers in Nostalgia Music (#1)

Christmas downloads

This was also seen last December.

Wham! have topped a list as the most downloaded Christmas song ever. The duo's 1984 hit 'Last Christmas' - written by George Michael - has been named the top downloaded festive track in the world.

The figures, collected by Nokia's OVI music store, place Mariah Carey's 'All I Want For Christmas Is You' - which re-entered the UK singles chart last week at 22 - as the second most popular, with **Bing Crosby's** 'White Christmas' completing the top three.

Bing Crosby Back from the Grave

This heading in our last issue related to the new "duet" between Bryn Terfel and Bing using the 1947 recording of "White Christmas". There were hopes that this could be the Christmas No. 1 but it failed to reach the top 40 in the UK. Many Crosby fans had mixed feelings about the release.

Party pad: Bing Crosby's Palm Springs home on the market for $3.4M

Another news item seen in December was this.

Want a crooner-style Christmas?

Legendary singer/actor Bing Crosby's Palm Springs, Calif., estate has just hit the market at $3.4 million, reports the *Los Angeles Times*.

And the property, nestled in the exclusive Thunderbird Heights area, is a single-story mid-century modern marvel. The five-bedroom estate was built in 1957 and has a whopping 6,700 square feet, the paper reports. The home is on an acre of land - which includes a sizeable pool and spa area.

Crosby reportedly entertained the hottest celebs of the time at this party pad.

Case in point: There's a suite called the Kennedy Wing, which was the former President's room when he stayed with Crosby in 1962, according to The Times.

The suite features a kitchen, living area, and separate entrance.

The property is also available as a luxury rental, but prices are by request only.

THE CROSBY CALENDAR

Members seem very pleased with the 2011 calendar and as you will have read, it sold out completely. Unfortunately there is an error in it as all the dates for the month of July are incorrect. This is due to the first of July being incorrectly shown to fall on a Thursday instead of Friday. The full calendar for the year on the back page is also incorrect in this respect.

To correct this, the printer has produced a sticker to be placed over the July page which you should find enclosed with this magazine. May I suggest that a 'post-it' note (or something similar) is also put on the back page so that the mistake is not compounded. My sincere apologies for this.

Also I must apologise for carelessly using the words "prepared the Crosby calendar" instead of "helped with" in the notes about Ron Bosley on the back page. Ron had provided photographs to John Joyce (who used to produce the calendar) for many years and he continued this practice with Jim Reilly who prepared it for three years from 2000. Ron took over the actual preparation from Jim in 2004.

The Redmond Nostalgia Company

We were very sorry to see that this company closed its doors forever on December 15, 2010. The Redmond Nostalgia Company, known by most as simply "Nostalgia", was formed by Crosby fan, the late Larry Kiner, in the 1960's in an effort to preserve the original recordings from The Golden Age Of Radio. They owned one of the largest privately held collections of radio programs including thousands of original radio transcription discs. Their emphasis was always on sound quality and they had a long reputation of selling the finest product in the industry. Over the years they issued radio programs on various formats including LP, 8-track tape, open reel, cassette and CD.

Many members will have purchased such material from Redmond over the years.

Road to Spokane: Bing Crosby's Family History

An event in Spokane highlighting Bing's story was due to take place in Spokane on March 5. Brian Zylstra publicized it as follows:

"He's one of Washington's most famous native sons. He enjoyed international fame and respect as a beloved singer and actor for decades, starting in the 1930s. Known especially for "White Christmas," he was one of the best-selling recording artists of all time, with over half a billion records in circulation. In the late '40s, polls indicated that he was the "most admired man alive."

If you're a Bing Crosby fan and want to learn more about his family or his Washington years, or if you want to learn more about your own family's history, you're invited to a free event in Spokane on Saturday, March 5.

Road to Spokane: Bing Crosby's Family History will be held at Gonzaga University's Wolff Auditorium from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., with the doors opening at 8 a.m."

The program was scheduled to be:

8 a.m. Doors open at Wolff Auditorium, Gonzaga University campus. Check-in, Bing Crosby music and images. Scanning station available for free scans of family documents or photos that you bring to the event.

9 a.m. - Noon. Crosby family history, Introduction to Genealogy, Reminiscing about Bing with Bing's nephew Howard Crosby.

Noon - 1:30 p.m. Lunch; tours of Gonzaga's Crosby House and Crosbyana Museum; watch short films featuring Bing; visit with Howard Crosby about his famous uncle; and see a number of displays by local genealogy resources.

1:30 - 2:30 p.m. Breakout sessions:

- Researching your family history online
- Get help with your family genealogy with access to expert volunteers and online resources

2:40 - 3:40 p.m. Breakout sessions:

- Researching your home and community

The program is sponsored by the Washington State Heritage Center and Gonzaga University.

Let's Take It From the Top

Greg Van Beek takes a look at the oldest fan club in the world

There are a relatively small number of companies and businesses that can boast surviving for 75 consecutive years. The odds of a small, non-profit organization dedicated to a single performer doing so are slim at best. But that's exactly what the International Club Crosby has managed to accomplish and we take great pride in this milestone anniversary. Bing himself surely would be proud of this feat and that he still has such a strong base of 'loyal supporters' as he preferred to call his fans. But before we look forward to the next 75 years, let's go back to the beginning and trace the roots of the ICC.

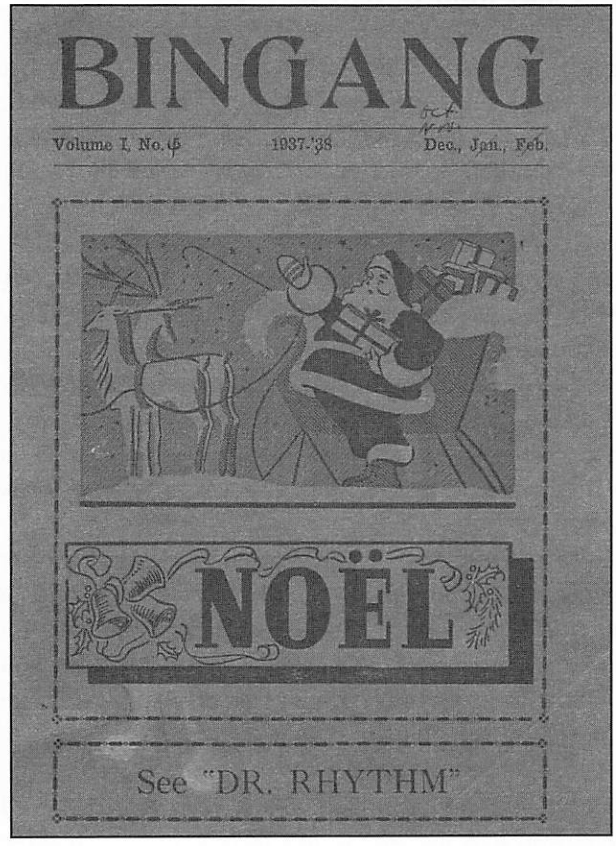
The earliest known organization of fans devoted to Bing dates to 1930 and was founded and run by Fay E. Zinn of East Orange, New Jersey. Simply called the "Bing Crosby Club", Fay published a newsletter three or four times per year until 1936 called 'Crosby Comments'. I have two surviving copies of his newsletters, one is 6 pages in length, dated November 1934 (Vol. 4, No. 1) and is dedicated to Dixie Lee Crosby. Of note is a letter reprinted from actress Jean Harlow that says in part; "...Bing is sure a wonderful personality and one that is going far in his chosen profession."

The other is Vol. 4, No. 4 dated March/April/May 1935 and features a cover story on Bing's film *Mississippi*. It also features a letter from **Al Bowlly** admonishing Fay for calling him the "British Bing Crosby". Bowlly writes; "....The chapter about me in your paper is charming with one exception - where you say "billing himself as the British Bing Crosby". Now I must correct you here. I have never billed myself as the above. I am all admiration for Bing and love his voice, but I just want you all to know me, not as the British Bing Crosby, but just Al Bowlly."

The Club Crosby, and BINGANG magazine, came in to existence in January of 1936, coinciding with Bing's new stint as host of NBC's Kraft Music Hall. The earliest known surviving issue of BINGANG is dated October/November/December 1937 (Vol. 1, No. 4). It was the first publication to be in magazine format (although it's more like a pamphlet in size, measuring 5 ? inches by 8 inches).

The president and editor was Cecilia "Ceil" Joseph. The magazine contains reviews of Bing's November 4th and November 11, 1937 KMH broadcasts, as well as notes from Betty Grable, James Stewart, Basil Rathbone, and Gertrude Niesen. Moving ahead to the summer of 1939 issue (Vol. 5, No. 2), The Club Crosby (as it was then known) has a new president/secretary/treasurer named Kathlyn "Kay" Browning, who remained in that position into the 1940's. A letter from Bing, dated July 17, 1939, is reproduced within. Bing writes:

> "Dear Kay, It is swell to know the club is getting along so well. I am enjoying my vacation. Made a short trip to Boston and hope to do some fishing below San Diego before Del Mar opens on August 2. My next job is at Paramount, to start September 25. The picture is now entitled "Follow the Sun". My best wishes to all.
> Sincerely, Bing."



Moving into the forties, and the Fall 1940 issue (Vol. 6, No. 3), we find a new active vice president Isabel Lee and assistant secretary Philomena Vendetti. Honorary members include Humphrey Bogart, James Stewart, Jeanette MacDonald, Basil Rathbone, Mary Carlisle, Spencer Tracy, Pat O'Brien, Bette Davis, Martha Raye, and Bob Burns. In a letter dated June 20, 1940, James Stewart writes to Kay; ".... I've just finished *No Time for Comedy* with Rosalind Russell and am about to start work on *Philadelphia Story* with Katherine Hepburn." Of course, Bing starred in the remake of *The Philadelphia Story* some 16 years later, titled *High Society*. This issue also contains reviews of Bing's film *Rhythm on the River*.

The spring 1941 issue (Vol. 6, No. 1) celebrated the

fifth anniversary of The Club Crosby. Bing writes with his congratulations;

"Dear Kay, Happy Anniversary! Our club certainly has been a loyal outfit these five years. I appreciate this, and hope the association has been enjoyable to all members.

Sincerely, Bing."

Honorary members writing in with their congratulations include Basil Rathbone; "Will you please convey to the members of your excellent Club Crosby my heartiest congratulations on your anniversary. I am always so happy when it is my good fortune to appear on Bing's program, and I hate to hear the way they rag him about his horses!!" Bette Davis writes; "Thank you for the Crosby Journal. You have done a grand job." And finally, Spencer Tracy writes; "Thank you very much for sending me the latest issue of the "Club Crosby BINGANG."

In a letter dated September 17, 1941 and featured in the Vol. 6, No. 3 Fall 1941 issue, Larry Crosby writes "Recently Bing made what I think is one of the best records in several years, a new song, "The Anniversary Waltz", which could easily be a standard and last for some time. Decca officials liked it so well they went overboard and used a twenty-six piece orchestra." An August 8, 1941 letter from Jeanette MacDonald says; "Many thanks for the latest issue of BINGANG. Mr. Raymond and I enjoyed every bit of it. *Smilin' Through* is completed and it will probably have a Fall release. Mr. Raymond and I are glad that we had the opportunity to appear together in a story that has a believable and tender romance. Best wishes to you and the BINGANG members."

Basil Rathbone writes The Club Crosby members once again in a letter dated November 14, 1940 and featured in the winter 1941 issue (Vol. 6, No. 4); "I am glad that you liked *Rhythm on the River*. It did not work out quite as much to my advantage as I had hoped. There was still in my part the elements of a heavy, which as you know I am trying so hard to get away from. I think you will like my latest picture, *The Mark of Zorro* with Ty Power. It is the best fight I have ever had on screen. I believe I am going to be on Bing's hour the Thursday before Christmas to read a little Christmas poem. If you have a Christmas edition of "BINGANG", do wish your members all good things from me at Christmas and for the New Year."

By the summer issue, dated September 1, 1944, BINGANG had a new editor, Philomena Vendetti. This issue features reviews and stories concerning Bing's beloved film *Going My Way*. An April 1944 blurb states;

"When Bing Crosby & Rise Stevens were recording at the Shrine Auditorium, Los Angeles, for scenes of the Leo McCarey production *Going My Way*, members of various classes at U.S.C., just around the corner, started dropping in to listen to the music and brought their lunch with them. One day, when Crosby couldn't be found, a posse of assistant directors finally tracked him down to one such group of collegians. It seemed that Bing had brought a chocolate cake from home as his contribution to the lunch, and was just cutting slices. "They'll have to wait for me for a few minutes," came back the groaner. "I'm not going to leave this outside slice, with all the icing, for any bunch of famished students."

Honorary members now included Ken Carpenter, Paul Whiteman, and Dinah Shore. For the winter 1944 issue, dated December 25, 1944, Connee Boswell accepts an honorary membership.

Letters from Bing are reproduced in the spring 1945 issue, dated March 31st of that year. In a letter to Philomena Vendetti dated January 30, 1945, Bing writes; "As always, your kind letter was greatly appreciated; also, the latest "BINGANG" is fine. We note many members are in the service, and have sent them all pipes. If we missed any, have them advise us."

In a follow-up letter, dated February 15, 1945, Bing responds; "News of the progress of the club is highly complimentary - so many new members in all parts of the world. Our magazine is outstanding. The literary and decorative contributions are fine, and we are particularly proud of the articles from members in the service. Permit me to thank the club officers for their splendid efforts, and all the members for their loyalty."

Johnny Mercer accepts an honorary membership for the winter 1945 issue, dated December 31, 1945, and by the summer 1947 issue, Bob Hope joined the ranks. This issue also saw the retirement of Philomena Vendetti, who was replaced by Ruth Ness. Larry Crosby writes; "It is true Bing recorded some tunes to accommodate friends which he should never have touched because the tunes never got anywhere. We have never been able to stop him from doing this, and feel he will always get in enough good ones to stay in the money."

In the March, 1948 issue, Paul Whiteman writes; "It is indeed an honor to be one of the honorary members of The Club Crosby." Ken Carpenter writes;

"Congratulations on the recent issue of "Bingang"! It is by far the best to date - you and your staff are doing a fine job. We've been turning out some great shows lately. The maestro has never been better, and Bill Morrow and Murdo McKenzie on the production side are really in the groove with grand entertainment. I know all the gang will be tuning in their Philcos to us on Wednesday nights, so when you hear us sign off you may be sure we're saying a special good-night to the "Bingang."

July 1948 marked The Club Crosby's 12th anniversary, and Billy de Wolfe joins the honorary members. Bing's Dad, H.L. Crosby, Sr. wrote dated May 12, 1948; "Dear Friends, I wish to acknowledge receipt of the Journal (sic) and to tell you Mrs. Crosby and I found it very interesting. With all good wishes to the

members." And in the November 1948 issue comes the news that Club Crosby now has its own radio show! Every Saturday from 5 to 5:30 pm over CFRB in Toronto, our own **Gord Atkinson** hosts this half hour program of solid Crosby music.

The 14th anniversary issue, dated September 1950, brings us the sad news that Bing's father passed away at age 79. Ruth Ness writes; "Those of us who have ever had the good fortune to visit the Crosby offices in Hollywood know that Mr. Crosby was a familiar figure around there with always a kind word for everybody. He was kind to the "Bingang" bunch too and will always be remembered in our thoughts and prayers."

Bing and his Dad

Bing himself is featured in a letter to the Club, this one from Spring Creek Ranch dated July 18, 1950; "Kindest regards to all members on the 14th anniversary of our club, which must make ours the - if not, one of the - oldest clubs, and it is quite a record!" If only Bing knew how far we've come over sixty years later!

January 1951 celebrated Bing's 20th anniversary as "Mr. Music" (along with the film of the same title) with a special issue. In August 1951, William Boyd, "Hopalong Cassidy" joined the ranks of our honorary members. By September 1952, Virginia Keegan became president and editor, and Bing thanks the Club for the "very attractive and unusual pipe and the fine tobacco pouch" which were received during the previous Christmas holidays. Bing assured us they will be put to very good use. In the September 1953 issue, rumors are put to rest that Bing may be retiring. It is strongly suggested he may do eight shows on television for the 1953-54 season!

By October 1956, BINGANG's editor was Joan Interrant, and the magazine was typed and compiled by Rena Albanesi. Honorary members now include Perry Como, Eddie Fisher, Ken Murray, Steve Allen, Patti Page, Donald O'Connor, Debbie Reynolds, Rosemary Clooney, Frankie Laine, Liberace, and the Fontane Sisters. Bing discusses television at length, and says:

> "I would never under any circumstances as far as they now exist, consider a full schedule of television. In fact, I would never consider more than one or two appearances a year, as long as I have a job in the movies. I think one activity is enough for an actor, particularly an actor of my advanced age. I believe quite firmly that actors and actresses who are or have been picture stars, and who are now engaging in a full scale television schedule, are injuring themselves irreparably as public attractions. It just isn't possible for any performer to be seen that often and retain his appeal and his authority."

One year later, October 1957, sees Rena Albanesi as Editor of BINGANG. In a July 29th letter, Bing discusses a planned TV show for December 12th over CBS, with "Sinatra and either Eydie Gorme or Clooney". By August 15, Larry Crosby wires "Signals changed. The TV show date is October 13." Of course, this is the infamous Edsel Show. Pat Boone and Bill Stewart accept honorary memberships. The 24th anniversary issue, February 1958, features coverage of Bing's October 1957 marriage to Kathryn Grant. Comedian Phil Silvers is now an honorary member. Michael Holliday accepts an honorary membership with the October 1958 issue, which is dedicated to the birth of Harry Lillis Crosby, Jr.

In the October 1959 issue, Bing writes to Rena on May 25, 1959; "I just finished reading your recent edition of BINGANG. I want to compliment you and your staff on the nice job you do with this publication. It's really quite an interesting piece of material, and very well assembled. I really am baffled as to where you find all of this subject matter, but I'm grateful to you and the gals for the work you do in connection to it." He also discusses a possible film role called *Bachelor's Baby,* a comedy by Gwen Davenport, which never materialized. This issue also details Bing's first meeting with Michael Holliday.

The Club Crosby (which it was still called) celebrated its 25th anniversary with the May 1961 issue. It featured many letters and articles from members discussing the Club and their involvement with it during the past quarter century. With the August 1961 issue, Phil, Dennis, and Lindsay Crosby became honorary members. December 1962's issue featured a salute to the 20th anniversary of Bing's most famous song, "White Christmas". Kathryn Crosby and Gary Crosby are now

honorary members. In an October 18, 1962 letter to Rena, Bing plugs his new Warner Bros. Christmas album "I Wish You a Merry Christmas", and says of it; "I think the album is the best yet, with great choral work and orchestrations."

For the April, 1963 issue, Bing writes to Rena about his work on Dinah Shore's TV show:

> "Happy to learn that you enjoyed the Dinah Shore telecast. I hope you had a chance to see it in color, because they had some real pretty sets, and she wore some lovely clothes, which of course were vastly enhanced by the use of color. She has a wonderful production staff. Having been on television for so many years, she has been able to put together quite a unit. Particularly valuable is Ticker Freeman, who has been her accompanist and musical advisor for many years - I guess almost since Dinah started out as a single, after leaving band work. So it was a pleasant chore, working with people like this. The reaction to the show has been uniformly good, I've run into quite a few people who said they enjoyed it, and the critical consensus was fine. So we were pleased that we took on the job."

The December 1963 issue addressed the suicide of Michael Holliday, and the shocking assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Rena used the following clipping in her editorial to show the kind of person JFK was, concerning his then recent stay at Bing's Palm Springs home; "October 2, 1963, While Bing Crosby was in the middle of his TV rehearsals for his show a telephone call came through, and he was told it was the President of the United States. And it was JFK himself calling Bing to tell him how much he was enjoying his rest in the Crosby home." The November 1964 issue covered Bing's ABC-TV sit-com, as well as the film *Robin & the 7 Hoods*.

For the Club Crosby's 30th anniversary issue, December 1966, Bing wrote a letter, dated June 27, 1966.

> "I'll be going to Ireland to make a picture. It's a Jules Verne story called, *Rocket to the Moon* - laid in the period around the turn of the century, and featuring some of the famous English character men like Terry-Thomas, Wilfred Hyde-White and Stanley Holloway. Gert Frobe who is so funny in *The Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines* is also in the cast. I play the great American promoter and circus operator, Phineas T. Barnum. It should be fun. They're going to photograph it in Ireland, weather willing, which will be a convenient thing for me because I have a couple of two-year-old race horses there and I'd like to see how they're coming on. There is some talk of a picture to be made with Vivien Leigh. This is a thing based on a play called, *The Absence of a Cello*. It was a mild hit on Broadway, and has had considerable success on the road, with different people playing the lead roles. The producers of this particular version plan to make a musical out of it. This is all very indefinite, but there has been some talk, and it could very well turn out to be a reality."

Unfortunately, as we all know, none of these projects became reality.

In a subsequent letter, dated October 7, 1966, Bing wrote about the "A Little Bit of Irish" television show he taped in Ireland, and discussed more planned films; "I have a film under discussion, to be shot at Disney Studios, called *The Family Band*. It's a period piece around the turn of the century. Has the songs written by the same fellas who did the *Mary Poppins* score. Mr. Disney told me the story when I was out there the other day, and it looks like it could be a good film. Hasn't been signed yet, but there's every likelihood it will go through. Also have a couple of other film possibilities I'm looking at. One called *The Great Saint Bernard*, which is about a Monk up in the Tyrolean Alps. He belongs to the order of Monks who raise these dogs in that area."

An interesting letter from Bing to Priscilla Koernig, and dated February 10, 1967, appeared in the May 1967 issue. Bing writes about the Hollywood Palace shows; "I don't generally look at the Hollywood Palace shows that I'm on because up where we live, we don't get Channel 7 well at all, and I'd rather wait until later on when they send me a copy of the film and I can run it on the projection machine at home. It's much better." For this issue, talk show host Mike Douglas accepted an honorary membership.

That covers all of the BINGANG issues I have in my archive up to 1970, which seems like a good place to leave off. I'll look back at the Club Crosby of the 1970's through its 2003 merger with the ICC in the summer issue.

Greg Van Beek

Editor: **Greg** mentioned his attendance at the Collection of Collectors event in his editorial. Arising from this, he was prominently featured on the front page of the January 15 issue of *The Daily News*, Washington County's Daily Newspaper and we have great pleasure in reproducing the article.

His Eyes Are Smiling

'White Christmas' crooner collection could make some green with envy.

"It's all about the hunt of where you can find it and what you can find," said Greg Van Beek of West Bend about his collection of Bing Crosby items displayed in his walk-in closet in West Bend Thursday evening. Van Beek will be displaying a selection of his items at the Collection of Collectors hosted by the Washington County Historical Society Jan, 18 at the Old Courthouse

Museum.

West Bend resident Greg Van Beek's interest in Bing Crosby's collaborations with other singers grew into a life-long quest to collect items owned by and related to the crooner.

Van Beek was 9 when he started collecting Crosby memorabilia. Thirty years later, he is an editor of the Bing Crosby fan club magazine, which is celebrating its 75th anniversary.

Van Beek will be among the collectors taking part in the Washington County Historical Society's fifth annual Collection of Collectors Tuesday at the Old Courthouse Museum.

Although the event is held annually, the exhibits are never the same, said organizer Jessica Sawinski Couch.

"There's always something different," she said. "People collect everything. "

Past exhibits have included coins, golf memorabilia, milk-bottles, Civil War battlefield relics, antique toys, kitchen ware, globes, banks, art and trains.

When some of the collectors call and describe what they have, it can seem questionable at first, Sawinski Couch said.

"At first you try to be nice, but then you see it and it's pretty cool," she said.

Sawinski Couch has personal experience with starting and growing collections.

My mom ended up with a pineapple (items) collection," she said. "She was looking for one for her front door and we just keep buying her more."

Van Beek's collection started small and kept on growing.

"I would collect records, pictures and videos," he said. "I loved discovering new performances. He sang with a lot of different people and it piqued my interest."

Van Beek's record collection grew so large that he does an annual Bing Crosby Christmas show on Hartford radio station WTKM and contributes to shows in Plymouth. His collection, however, is not limited to music and videos.

"I have a walk-in closet devoted to it, so it's not taking over the house or anything," he said.

That closet includes one of Crosby's pipes, a couple of hats, autographed photos and the suit coat he wore in his last movie. Through the years he's enjoyed showing his collection and talking to other collectors.

"I also had the honor of having Bing's widow visit my home in 2003," he said.

At the show, collectors will have five minutes to introduce themselves and then people who attend can talk to the collector and view the collections, Sawinski Couch said.

"It's informal, but at the same time very informative and it's a lot of fun," she said.

Kristine Walden

Classic Hollywood: The sound of the season in Bing Crosby's Christmas specials

The *Los Angeles Times* had an interesting article by Susan King on December 13.

The singer's family opens his archives to release 'Bing Crosby: The Television Specials Volume 2: The Christmas Specials' on DVD and 'Bing Crosby: The Crosby Christmas' on CD.

Since he introduced Irving Berlin's Oscar-winning tune "'White Christmas" in 1942's *Holiday Inn*, Bing Crosby and the yuletide have become synonymous. Crosby, who died in 1977, performed the song again in the 1954 holiday movie perennial "White Christmas."

But even holiday traditions change. Though "White Christmas" may be the bestselling single of all time, the recording is no longer the most popular Christmas song this season, according to *Billboard*. That honor belongs to Mariah Carey's 1994 "All I Want for Christmas Is You." Der Bingle and "White Christmas" have dropped to No. 7.

"For a certain generation that would be totally astounding," says Ron Simon, a curator for the Paley Center for Media. "I think this is an appropriate time to rediscover Bing Crosby."

The Bing Crosby Archive has opened its vaults and recently released "Bing Crosby: The Television Specials Volume Two: The Christmas Specials" on DVD. It features his first two holiday-themed specials from 1961 and 1962, 1971's "Bing Crosby and the Sounds of Christmas," which features his second family, wife Kathryn Crosby and children Mary, Harry and Nathaniel, and his last special, 1977's "Bing Crosby's Merrie Olde Christmas," which features the now-iconic duet with David Bowie, "The Little Drummer Boy/Peace on Earth." There's also a bonus, the trippy 1957 special "Happy Holidays With Bing and Frank"; the "Frank," of course, being Sinatra. The archive also has released a new holidays CD, "Bing Crosby: The Crosby Christmas," and there are more DVDs and CDs planned for next year.

On Wednesday, the Paley Center in Beverly Hills is saluting Crosby and his holiday specials with special guest Mary Crosby (Kathryn Crosby is recovering from injuries from an auto accident and won't be attending). On the same day, the MLB Network is going to show Crosby's recently discovered recording of the long-thought-lost television broadcast of the memorable final game of the 1960 World Series between the Pittsburgh Pirates (Crosby was a part owner of the team) and the New York Yankees. (The Pirates won with a ninth-inning home run by Bill Mazeroski.)

Mary Crosby explains why it took so long for the family to mine Bing's vault in the basement of the family's Bay Area home.

We followed Dad's lead," says the actress best known for shooting J.R. on "Dallas." "Dad was very much under the radar. It was part of who he was. We were raised to be under the radar and not to work to get things out. So I think it took us 30 years to figure it out. Then we realized there is this whole generation that has no idea who he is. As a family we are doing whatever we can now to get his name out there."

The archive is immense, says Robert S. Bader, vice president, marketing and promotion, for Bing Crosby Enterprises. For the last couple of years, he's been sifting through the archive master by master, tape by tape.

"There's thousands of reels of tape and film," Bader says. "After his association with Decca Records ended, he became the owner of his master materials. He was also the owner of his masters for his radio show that he produced. There is in the neighborhood of 2,000 song masters. He made around 2,000 commercial recordings and about 4,000 radio shows."

Crosby also was a pioneer in using tape. Before World War II, recordings were made on record. But in 1947, he was shown a demonstration of tape technology that had been brought over from Germany. And on Aug. 15, 1947, Crosby recorded a radio show on tape. "He was anxious to record his radio shows in advance so he wouldn't have to do it live," says Bader. "It was a lot of pressure and a scheduling thing. He was making movies full time and making records."

Though Crosby doesn't have the hip factor of his peers such as Sinatra and Dean Martin, Mary Crosby believes that her father's music remains relevant.

"The thing that made him different was he wasn't just limited to one area," she says. "He could do jazz. He could do country. He could do Irish. He could do Christmas. He sang with such truth. I think if you are authentic and you are honest, it doesn't matter if it was 50 years ago or tomorrow. So it's up to us to get him out there. All people have to do is listen and they will connect. I think his music translates perfectly today."

Susan King

Paley Center Tribute

Susan King mentioned this event and this is how it was advertised. Mouth watering is understating it!

Ultra Rare Bing: Crosby on TV
Saturday, December 11, 2010 to Sunday, December 12, 2010. 12:00 pm PT. Los Angeles

In advance of our Bing Crosby panel, please join us for a special weekend of Ultra Rare Bing—screenings culled from the Crosby family's personal archive, most unseen since their original airdates. See Bing in a tour-de-force dramatic role with costar Joan Collins in a recently restored episode of *The Danny Thomas Hour*; singing with Diana Ross and the Supremes during a musical hour taped on the Paramount lot digitally restored from the original masters; starring in his 1964 situation comedy with Beverly Garland; and sharing reflections on his life in rare interviews including his first ever television appearance in color, a 1954 interview with golf great Jimmy Demaret.

Tickets are FREE but RSVPs are required.
Saturday, December 11, 2010.
12:00 pm **The Edsel Show** *(10/13/57)*
Featuring Bing, Frank Sinatra, Louis Armstrong, Rosemary Clooney.
1:00 pm **Hollywood and the Stars: The One and Only Bing** *(12/23/63)*
Documentary narrated by Joseph Cotten
The Bing Crosby Show*: "The Dominant Male" (11/9/64) Bing, Beverly Garland, Frank McHugh, Gary Crosby.*
2:00 pm **The Danny Thomas Hour: The Demon Under The Bed** *(10/9/67)*
Bing in a rare dramatic performance unseen for decades costarring Joan Collins, George Maharis, and Mary Frances Crosby.
KCRA-TV News *(12/16/71)*
Bing and family interviewed for local Sacramento news program prior to benefit performance at Laguna Honda Hospital.
3:00 pm **Girl Talk** *(5/19/67)*
Bing is visited at his Hillsborough home by Australian talk show host Hazel Philips.
Bing! A 50th Anniversary Gala *(3/20/77)*
Bing celebrates five decades in show business with guests Bob Hope, Paul Anka, Bette Midler, the Mills Brothers, Rosemary Clooney, Pearl Bailey, Donald O'Connor, Sandy Duncan, Debbie Reynolds, Anson Williams, Martha Raye, Joe Bushkin, Kathryn Crosby, Harry Crosby, Mary Frances Crosby, and Nathaniel Crosby.

Sunday, December 12, 2010
12:00 pm **Person to Person** *(12/3/54)*
Bing, Edward R. Murrow, Lindsay Crosby.
The Jimmy Demaret Show *(1954)*
Bing interviewed by golfer Jimmy Demaret in his first color television appearance.
12:30 pm **The Bing Crosby Show for Oldsmobile** *(10/1/58)*
Bing, Dean Martin, Patti Page, Mahalia Jackson, and Florence Henderson.
Telescope: Call Him Lucky *(1/6/66)*
Bing interviewed by Fletcher Markle for Canadian Broadcasting Company.
2:00 pm **The Bing Crosby Special** *(10/23/68)*
Bing, Bob Hope, Jose Feliciano, Diana Ross and the Supremes.
KGO-TV interview (1/10/69)
Local San Francisco host Russ Conlon interviews Bing

on the grounds of the Crosby home in Hillsborough.
***3:00 pm* The Carol Burnett Show** *(11/10/69)*
Bing, Carol Burnett, Ella Fitzgerald, Rowan & Martin.
The Road to Lebanon (A Danny Thomas Special) *(4/20/66) Bing, Danny Thomas, Sheldon Leonard, Bob Hope.*
Commercial and PSA compilation
(Internal Revenue, Minute Maid, ThermaFax, Prevent Blindness, Arthritis Research, Toys for Tots).
Happy Holidays with Bing and Frank *(12/20/57)*
Newly restored print from the original 35 mm negative! Bing and Frank Sinatra.

Bing Crosby: The Special Years

Wednesday, December 15, 2010
7:00 pm PT. Los Angeles
IN PERSON
Mary Crosby - Mitzi Gaynor - Richard M. Sherman
Additional guests to be announced.
Ring in the holiday season as we celebrate the iconic life and career of Bing Crosby with a special screening and panel event featuring the world premiere of the new documentary, *Down Argentine Way: Bing Crosby in Buenos Aires*, a fascinating chronicle of Crosby's 1970 trip to South America featuring archival concert footage never before seen in the United States and all new interviews with Kathryn Crosby and others. The screening will be followed by a panel discussion with members of Crosby's family; his costar from the classic musical *Anything Goes*, legendary entertainer Mitzi Gaynor; acclaimed Disney composer Richard M. Sherman (*Mary Poppins*); and others. The program will also be interspersed with classic clips from Crosby's television specials featuring Mitzi, Frank Sinatra, Rosemary Clooney, David Bowie, Carol Burnett, Dean Martin, and more. We couldn't leave out Bing's holiday specials, so there'll be merry moments from those as well, plus join us for a holiday dessert reception following the show.

Maureen Solomon was there for the ICC and she sends her in-depth report on the highlights of a wonderful Crosby festival.

SATURDAY December 11th, 2010

THE EDSEL SHOW (1957)

In this early television show Bing surrounded himself with longtime friends such as Louis Armstrong, Frank Sinatra, and his "White Christmas" costar, Rosemary Clooney.

The opening number, "Now You Has Jazz," is from "High Society." Bing is accompanied by bravura musicians and introduces each one as he does in the film. Bing and the quartet close with a rollicking finale where Bing proves he can sing rock and roll, as well as every other kind of musical style and with great élan. Sinatra looks stressed and seriously undernourished, but he comes alive in his songs with Louis and in the medley with Clooney and Crosby.

A lot of the charm in the show comes from unexpected things such as the appearance of Bob Hope who objects to the boys singing 'his song' "The Road to Morocco."

After some kibitzing, Bing playfully grabs Bob's arm and gives him a jab in the shoulder. As the cameras begin to dolly in on Rosie in the background, Hope is confused about which direction to exit. Bing gives him a couple of hand gestures and they each go their separate ways, just in time for the song. Ah, live television!

Frank, Rosie and Bing rehearse their medley for the Edsel show.

After a few college tunes sung by Sinatra and Crosby, Lindsay Crosby shows up to sing some rock and roll. He's good vocally, but seems nervous and uptight.

The highlight of the show is a roundelay of tunes sung by Bing, Frank and Rosie. The fellas are each trying to win her over with song. They're all charming in this delicious number. Are there any singers today who could perform this medley as superbly as they do?

HOLLYWOOD AND THE STARS: THE ONE AND ONLY BING (1963)

Thank God for David L. Wolper! Although condensed into one hour, his terrific shows were very well done, and eminently entertaining. Narrated by Joseph Cotten, whose voice is almost as recognizable as Bing's, we are shown the evolution of Bing Crosby, with emphasis on his many talents and interests, conveying upon him the mantle of an uncommonly common man whom the public adored. The best clips are those of Bing mugging at the racetrack, joking with Bob Hope on the golf course and singing with Sinatra during the War Years. Bing's two marriages, families, career and hobbies are covered very well in this unique series that many of us who grew up in the 1960s watched religiously.

THE BING CROSBY SHOW: THE DOMINANT MALE (1964)

This is perhaps one of the best of the twenty-eight sitcom shows produced by Bing Crosby Productions. The wrinkle is Gary Crosby plays the boyfriend of Bing's oldest daughter. Gary is ranting about women taking over the role of decision makers in the household. He believes in the lord of the manor approach to the family, one that Gary railed against in real life. But this show dispels Gary's claim of Bing's indifference, because there is real paternal warmth, pride and enjoyment among the two when they duet early in the show. Gary does the bluesy part while Bing adds the depth and flourish. Bing makes it all seem so easy while Gary, who was a good actor, seems unsettled and rarely smiles, even at the end of the episode.

Gary convinces Bing to lay down the law to his family and to act with more authority. The biggest point of contention becomes what to wear at the formal country club dance. Because of Gary, Bing and wife Beverly Garland are at odds. Bing shows up at the affair in a gaudy plaid jacket, an example of art imitating life, as color-blind Bing usually wore mismatched casual clothing. Gary shows up in a similar outfit. All ends well as both Gary and Bing realize it's not so bad to compromise, because it leads to happier times for all.

At the end of this episode, Bing sings 'How Deep in the Ocean." His voice is astoundingly beautiful.

Beverly Garland was told when she was cast for this show that she would have to supply the romance because Bing was not demonstrative. She decided to take the reins and whenever possible, she would hug and kiss Bing. The show ends with Bing and Beverly arm-in-arm, putting out the living room lights, playfully jingling the chandelier, and exchanging a few kisses as they head upstairs to bed. Compared to today's sitcoms, this one was sexy and adult.

Two weeks later there was an episode entitled, "The Liberated Woman."

THE DANNY THOMAS HOUR: THE DEMON UNDER THE BED 1967

In a rare dramatic TV performance, the other being *Dr. Cook's Garden*, Bing tackles the role of aging actor Charlie Castle, who has been told he may lose his voice. George Maharis is a photographer who is hired to photograph him, and find out what makes the famous actor tick. Bing's Charlie Castle is bitter and angry. In his first scene, filmed in the foyer of Greystone Mansion in Beverly Hills, Bing shoots pool as Maharis introduces himself. As they leave, Bing smashes his pool cue against a wall. Bing drives recklessly along Mullholland Drive, throwing a script out the window.

At a huge Hollywood party he greets his eight year-old daughter, played by Mary Frances Crosby. She gives a very good performance as a child who seems wiser than her years. Bing and Mary use handmade puppets to do a little show in the study, until his jealous ex-wife, played by Joan Collins, interrupts their father-daughter moment. After a spat in which Collins goads him about his parenting, Bing strikes her in the face and walks out. This was pretty shocking and a departure for a Crosby character.

Clicking away, the annoying Maharis follows the actor to a sound stage where Bing does a superb, self-pitying boozy thespian stream-of-consciousness scene — singing, quoting theater, dancing, bitterly rambling and reflecting on his life, until he flops onto a mattress holding an empty bottle of booze to his chest. Maharis develops the pictures in order to discover the inner man behind the fading star. When Maharis views the rage-filled photos of the actor, he tells him in no uncertain terms that he's a vain, self-centered man who needs to take stock of his life.

All ends well as Bing leaves the hospital with a clean bill of health. He reunites with his lonely daughter who had hoped for her Daddy's return. The film is notable not only for the teaming of Bing and Mary Frances, but for the carte blanche given Bing to act out his character's animosity and self-indulgence in many scenes. It's a similar role as in *The Country Girl*. He's not hiding his true self here, his intensity is very different - he lets it all out. The color print was spectacular and Bing is extremely tanned which makes his 'sapphirine' eyes remarkably expressive. They literally pierce the screen each time we see them.

GIRL TALK 1967

Introduced by a bubbly Australian talk show host Hazel Philips, Bing is interviewed at his Hillsborough home. The TV host traveled to San Francisco to interview American movie stars. Bing was apparently her favorite and she admits to being in awe of him, but states he is exactly as kind, interesting and affable as she had imagined. Silent footage follows her and her assistant driving through the Hillsborough countryside and up the driveway to Bing's magnificent house. The interview is conducted outside, under an archway. Bing apologizes to her twice for the rainy weather, telling her that under sunny skies San Francisco is an even lovelier town.

At Bing's side is his black Labrador, Remus, whom Bing talks about at length, — Remus, a good hunting dog, how he has aged and about the quiet, kind attributes of the Labs.

When Hazel asks him when he is going to visit Australia, Bing replies that he would love to go but not for just a few days, he needs at least a month to explore and get the feel of the place. He expresses interest in fishing Australia's streams, golfing and racetrack, and displays a great deal of knowledge about the country. He talks about his children and their talents, citing Phillip, who was on tour in Vietnam, as having the best voice in the family. When asked about Hollywood and show

business, Bing has the nicest things to say about the town. Even though there are scandals from time to time, he states that most people in Hollywood work very hard. His own favorite movies are *Going My Way*, *Little Boy Lost* and *High Society*. When Ms. Philips says people think of Grace Kelly as cool, Bing springs to her defense, saying she was a very warm person who made everyone on the set feel comfortable. He adds she knew every crew member's birthday and was a very kind person with an infectious sense of humor.

During the interview Bing is effusive, seeming to love being outside chatting in the rain. For Bing, being an outdoorsman, this was natural and he seems the epitome of a warm, happy satisfied man at this time in his life. The show ends with hostess Philips thanking Bing and requesting the audience give something back to the man who has brought so much happiness to others. She suggests they send letters to the show that they will forward to him. Bing was known for answering every fan letter.

BING! A 50th ANNIVERSARY GALA (1977)

Bing celebrates his 50th Anniversary in show business at Ambassador College in Pasadena in March, 1977. The show opens with Bob Hope singing a spoof song about Bing as he makes his way through the crowds and into the building. As he sings this intro, he hobnobs briefly with Debbie Reynolds, Donald O'Connor, Sandy Duncan and Martha Raye.

Bob enters from the back of the auditorium introducing Bing who enters from the wings. He sings "Now You Has Jazz," with Joey Buskin's combo.

Bette Midler plays an usherette whom Bing invites onstage. She sings "Glow Worm" with the Mills Brothers. Then Bing sings "Dinah" with the Brothers. Towards the end they flub a bit on the words. Bing does his memorable scat, almost as great as his 1930s recording with them, — and finishes right on the mark!

One of the most enjoyable moments is when Bing invites Pearl Bailey onstage and they take choruses singing, "Gone Fishin'." Pearl needles him about being cute and foxy, which he seems to enjoy very much.

There's a romantic duo with Kathryn as they sing a medley of songs. I cringe watching this segment, as this was the night of the 20-foot fall into the pit that almost killed Bing, rupturing a disc in his back, possibly hastening his death 6 months later. During the song "Baby Face," Bing changes the words and sings, "I'm on a ridge," noticing the uneven floor.

Bing does a medley with Buskin, then Bob Hope comes out to give Bing a phony award called The Crummy. Bing is fine form, but he had a habit of reading the lines of the other performers as they spoke. With the rigors of the entire show on his shoulders, it may have been a way to keep in time with the flow of the show, like tapping his foot.

At this stage in his life Bing looked like an American Eagle, his features more angular, his reflexes a tiny bit slower, but his fluidity with language and his capacity to keep all on track, are not dimmed one iota.

It is a tribute to his strength and stamina that after recuperating from his terrible fall at the end of the show into the orchestra pit, that he recuperated quickly and was back performing by August. His reflexes were such that he was able to break his fall by grabbing onto a curtain. Although everyone was crying and panicking, Kathryn has said Bing was whistling as the paramedics came to take him to the hospital. No doubt he did this to assure everyone he was okay.

His recovery in the hospital and at home was intense but he made the decision to tour within a few months. His doctors told him to take it easy and play no more than 9 holes of golf. He listened to none of them, wanting to live his life as he always had. He enjoyed the tour in Europe and in Norway he sang for hours at an amusement park, outside, on a cold rainy night. He endured the accolades and plethora of gifts they handed him, including a pair of skis that were slung over his shoulders. He stood patiently as they gave him silver bowls and awards to other singers. He did encores...in the rain. At the Palladium in London he performed night after night to sold-out crowds. He gave interviews and recorded only days before he died.

He happily posed with his friends in Spain on the golf course, and when he won an 18-hole game of golf in Spain on October 14th, he was upbeat. "That was a great game of golf, fellas, let's go have a Coca-Cola." And that was it. Who knows if the fall in March contributed to his death? Was he graced by a swift demise, one that had him taking flight, to soar aloft, like an eagle into the stratosphere? Would it be selfish to ask for 20 more years of Bing? Fifty years was not enough....

SUNDAY December 12th

PERSON TO PERSON (December 3, 1954)

Edward R. Murrow visits Bing's spacious home on Mapleton Drive in Holmby Hills. Bing is shooting pool in the game room and tells Murrow that contrary to how it looks, as a kid he spent most of his time in a reading room and was a 'studious type.' He shows off his display of gold records, a gift from Decca. "Us old gaffers like to live in the past," he says, as he sings a bit of each tune.

After a brief visit with Lindsay and some sports talk, Bing heads downstairs. He sings "This old house once rang with laughter,"..... and trails off. It's a melancholy moment because Dixie died in that house only two years before. He shows off Dixie's china collection and then moves on to another room singing, "Count Your Blessings.

Taking a cue from other *Person to Person* shows, Bing talks about his paintings and a photo he took of his family. But he comes to life when his interest is peaked

by Murrow's yarn about winning a bet from a studio head; Bing wants to know all the details. In these moments you get a sense of the man and what it was like to trade stories with him.

Bing explains he had to convince his mother that doing *The Country Girl* was a good role for him because it had some redeeming qualities. He ends with a funny story about gagster Barney Dean, who supplied jokes for the "Road" pictures, and then says farewell at the front door. Intentional or not, Bing has shown himself as father, husband and son on this tour of his home. It was as if he crafted a half hour playlet for his public, because this installment of *Person to Person* is different, more intimate than all the others I've seen.

THE JIMMY DEMARET SHOW (1954)

With the colorful beauty of the mountains and desert of Palm Springs behind them, Bing hangs out, shooting the breeze with golfer Jimmy Demaret. Bing tells him Ben Hogan is so good because he's always practicing. He talks about the Pebble Beach charity golf tournament he originated in Rancho Santa Fe. Commenting on the weather Bing says, "When the Pebble Beach wind blows, it's just like Galveston!"

In this easy-going discussion Bing casually mentions the Red Cross, Community Chest, a youth recreation center and how they raised $56,000 for charities, the largest amount since beginning the tournament. He talks about his friends Bob Hope, Leo Durocher, Dean Martin and the golf courses he's played: "Cypress Point is always interesting, but Pebble Beach is the toughest." He mentions his love of fishing and says he enjoys it best of all: "With fishing it's a complete release. It's very difficult to take your problems with you when fishing."

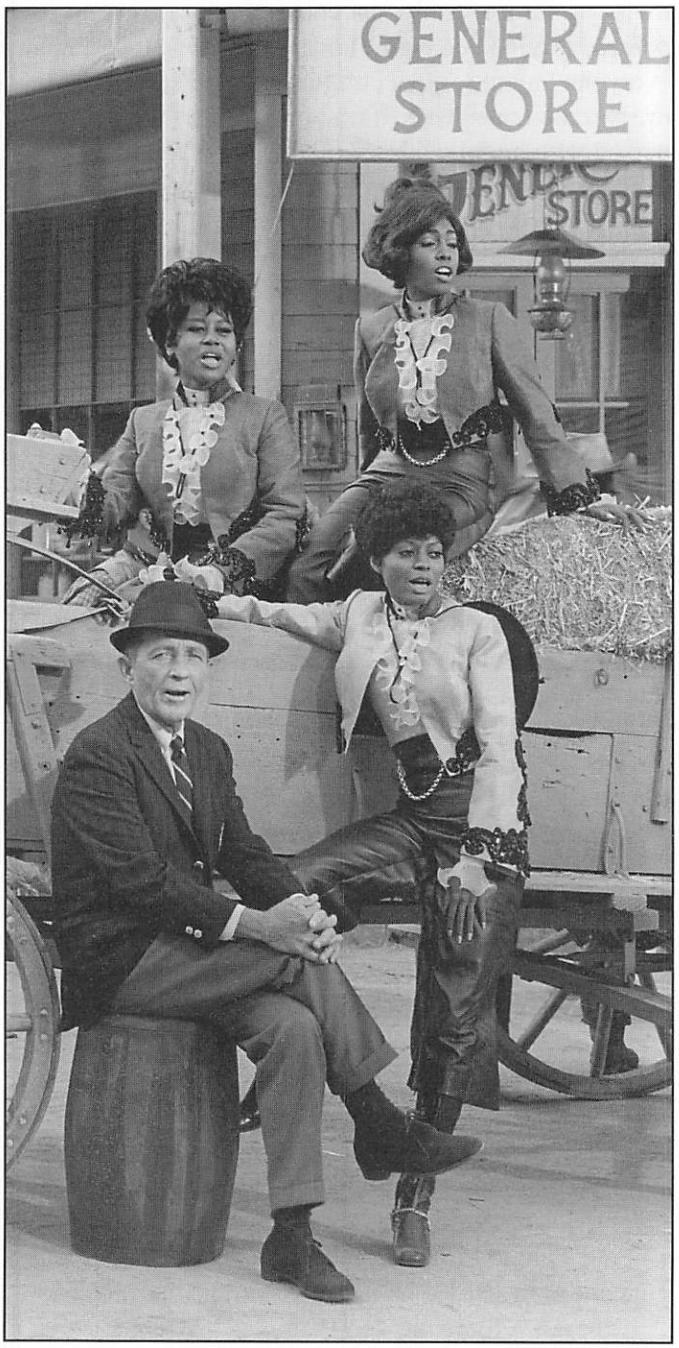
THE BING CROSBY SHOW FOR OLDSMOBILE (October 1, 1958)

Bing opens the show with a tribute to one of his idols, Al Jolson, singing "Swanee." His guests are Dean Martin, Patti Page, Mahalia Jackson. In rocking chairs, Bing and Dean trade off a medley of Italian and Irish songs – "musical pizza with a shamrock." They also sing a "Villa Capri" medley, an Italian restaurant that was a show business hangout for many years. When Dean complains about the notes being too high, Bing lets loose with "You've been higher than this!"

THE BING CROSBY SPECIAL (October 23, 1968)

Fast forward ten years to 1968, and a different kind of music.

This special, set on the Paramount lot, makes great use of many locations from the famous Bronson gate to the studio's sound stages and streets. Bing and Bob Hope sing and dance onto the lot and end up in a production office and state they would like to make a new "Road" picture – 'if they can find one that's downhill.' They look very dapper and have lots of energy; Bing even does an RCA commercial. On the western set of *Paint Your Wagon* Bing teams up with Diana Ross and the Supremes to sing, "They Call the Wind Maria."



Diana Ross and the Supremes join Bing in song.

Jose Feliciano is given a solo, "California Dreaming," and Bing joins him in a duet, "Momma Don't Allow," which Jose turns into a tour de force guitar solo. Bing tells him, "You got that thing walking and talking!"

In a moving tribute to Hollywood's past, Bing sings "That Face" while carried aloft in a cherry picker, which made me think of the time in the 1931 when he was attached to a crane and swung over the audience at the Paramount Theater in New York. That 'face' turns out to be giant portraits of Gloria Swanson, Dietrich,

Hayworth, Lombard, Monroe, Garbo and Lamour, spotlighted, with Bing crooning to each beauty. Next, Bing sings "Funny Face," as we see photos of the comedy icons he revered: W.C. Fields, Harold Lloyd, Laurel & Hardy, and Buster Keaton. His reverie ends when he encounters a picture of Bob Hope with a gigantic nose.

After this humorous intro there is a western spoof, updated for the 1960s. Bing is very funny as a fey hippie sheriff who tends to his potted plants, wearing love beads, fringed vest, and head band. His mantra is, "Everything is love. No violence." Bob Hope joins him in the skit, and Stella Stevens is the schoolmarm. Dorothy Lamour flutters by, eliciting the comment, "Didn't we see her in Zanzibar? This could be a "Road" picture!"

The last segment of this highly enjoyable special is on the sound stage with Bing, the Supremes and Jose Feliciano. They sing, "Do You Know the Way to San Jose," and a Beatles medley. This was the updated Bing, expanding in a new culture with new music. He doesn't entirely fit, but he makes it work. At the end Bing tosses all the charts in the air and grabs Feliciano's guitar, as if to throw it. Then he gently returns it to its place. Over the credits, sitting next to Feliciano, Bing almost falls backward, off a bale of hay. This is a very relaxed Crosby!

KGO-TV INTERVIEW (January 20, 1969)

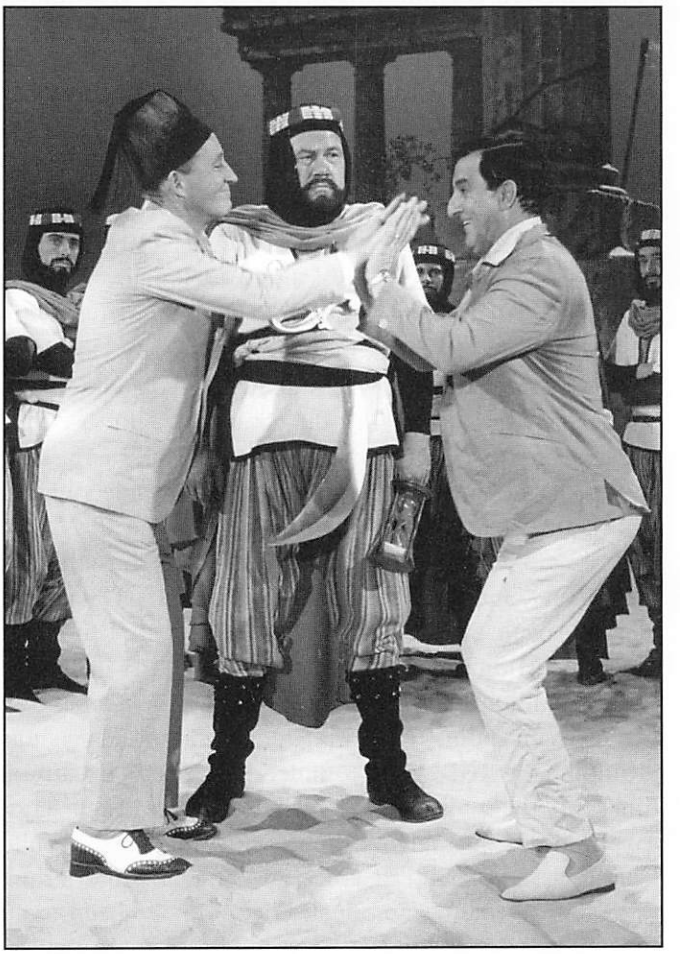
San Francisco host Russ Conlon interviews Bing on the grounds of the Crosby home in Hillsborough, CA. Bing talks mostly about music, but again, loves chatting about characters he's known. He says he could write a book about Tubby Garron, the head of the Music Dept. at Paramount Pictures. "He was a song plugger for 60 years, a most unforgettable character who could convince anyone to buy or use a song."

Bing also says he didn't like the new music at first, but the younger generation is more expert with their instruments than in earlier days. He likes the Beatles and says they have good songs and harmonies. He talks about Jack Kapp and Decca Records, and when asked about who's the richest person in Hollywood, he says Bob Hope is, owning more real estate in North Hollywood than anyone.

THE ROAD TO LEBANON (A DANNY THOMAS SPECIAL 1966)

Bing is scouting locations for his next "Road" picture, without Bob, ("Bob is too busy…he can't hear my songs for his wheezing!"), when he meets up with Danny Thomas who's in Lebanon to judge a local beauty contest. The girls are covered from head to foot in veils. Bing and Danny sing "Together." Bing tells Danny, "You sing as well as Bob, but don't worry, you'll improve." They're kidnapped by a sheik (also played by Danny) seeking revenge because one of Danny's ancestors committed a sin when he went to America – he had his nose fixed. For this Danny and cohort Bing must die.

After escaping their captors they roam the desert on live camels to the tune of "The Last Round-up." Danny says, "I tried sitting side saddle, but all the Arabs kept winking at me." Bing sings "You Enjoy Being a Girl." All of this is very funny as well as risqué. They entertain some of the sheik's men and do the patty-cake routine from "Zanzibar" where the natives knock each other out cold.



Bing and Danny Thomas try the patty-cake routine.

As in "Morocco," they're walking the desert sands threadbare. Delirious, they dance "Sheik to Sheik," and "Tea for Two." Taking a break, Bing sits on Danny's back, and accidentally tumbles backwards over him. Soon they're buried up to their necks in sand. Who shows up to save them? Bob Hope, driving a golf cart – "NOW I'll get out of this SAND TRAP!" It turns out the nose job that Danny's ancestor got was to make it larger, not smaller. All ends well as Bing and Danny sing the "Road to Lebanon" song.

COMMERCIAL and PSA compilation

In a short Public Service Announcement for the IRS, Bing tells us to get our taxes done, be sure to sign the forms, check the figures and clip the W-2s to the paperwork. Following that, Bing provides some golf tips

in a Texaco commercial. He sings a song snippet about Sky Chief Gasoline – "It's the right blend for driving." Next comes Thermafax copying where Bing shows how to make labels, copies, and laminate documents in plastic for the 3M Company. Following is Toys for Tots on the set of *Stagecoach*. Bing asks the public at Christmastime to fill the bins with toys for the underprivileged children of their communities. There is a Minute Maid commercial with his family and another PSA for the Arthritis Foundation. The last is Keep America Beautiful where Bing talks about the importance of keeping America clean as we see littered highways and campgrounds.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS WITH BING AND FRANK (December 20, 1957)

Frank Sinatra produced this Christmas special and Bing is his only guest. Sinatra also selected all the songs and their sequence for this show. Nelson Riddle provided the arrangements. Frank decorates the tree singing "Mistletoe and Holly." Then Bing arrives with gusto and engages Frank in a duet of "Happy Holiday." Bing tells Frank's valet who's taking his coat and hat, to "grab the drape and hit the skimmer." In a scene reminiscent of *High Society*, Bing and Frank share some punch at the bar. Carolers, who are outside singing "Deck the Halls," whisk them back in time to Merrie Olde England where Frank and Bing and the villagers join in on "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen." "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing," O Come All Ye Faithful," "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear," and "O Little Town of Bethlehem," are among other Christmas songs sung in this pleasant setting. Returning to the present, Bing sings "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" – ("I sang it a Jillion times on the radio.") After more tunes Frank says, "Well, don't just stand there." Bing sings "White Christmas," in beautiful voice and after a while, Frank joins him. While this production could have been more rousing in overall tone, it's a tribute to Sinatra that he decided to make this Special with the accent on Modern and Traditional Christmas music with his friend and mentor....Bing.

THE ROAD TO ARGENTINA: BING CROSBY IN BUENOS AIRES (1970)

In 1970 Bing and Kathryn Crosby went to Argentina to check out the horses, among other things, and as they prepared to come back to the States, a TV host named Nicolás "Pipo" Mancera cornered them at the Buenos Aires airport and got Bing to agree to be on his weekly Saturday morning show, "Sabados Circulares."

Mancera was known for 'la camara sorpresa,' surprising guests with his roving camera. In one of his shows he was at the bedside of a celebrity when he woke up, scaring the daylights out of him. He also had a technique of asking intimate, sometimes irritating questions to catch his 'victims' off guard.

Back at the studio, at the beginning of the show, he asks the Crosbys what side of the bed they each sleep on, if they have pet names for one another, barraging them with mundane and silly questions. Bing submits to this odd state of affairs without so much as a blink. Kathryn was to say in a later interview that the reporter was intrusive, but harmless.

Although not as fluent in Spanish as Kathryn, Bing understands just about every word. In fact, the entire one hour program is spoken by Bing, Kathryn and Mancera in Spanish. Against the backdrop of a sound stage, accompanied by piano and bass, Bing sings song after song —"Where the Blue of the Night....," Pennies from Heaven," "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head," to name a few. He's tanned and relaxed and takes the whole thing in great stride.

Bing sings a Spanish tune, glasses on the tip of his nose. Never hesitant or faltering, he reads the lyrics and remarks, "I never sang with my glasses on before." Aside from Bing's luscious voice, one of this show's pleasures is seeing an unrehearsed, spontaneous Bing, gracious to perfection, bemused by the host, glad to have his wife by his side, soldiering through this very strange situation. All the while, Mancera hovers around, never letting up, questioning, commenting, requesting song after song – he's *in heaven* with Bing as his guest.

The Crosby family is putting together a documentary from this treasure found in Bing's archives. It has English subtitles and will include some comments from Kathryn Crosby and there's talk of including Mancera, who is now 81. As interesting as narration can often be, nothing compares to watching this show uninterrupted. I hope this documentary is released with the Argentinian show as intact as possible with a minimum of commentary so we can enjoy it as it was meant to be seen.

THE PANEL DISCUSSION – December 15.

The three-day marathon of BING TV RARITIES, produced for the Paley Center for Media, by Rene Reyes, was capped by a panel discussion and reception with Paramount producer A.C. Lyles, songwriter Richard M. Sherman, Rosemary Clooney's daughter Maria Ferrer, Mary Crosby Brodka, actress/singer Mitzi Gaynor and moderated by writer Pete Hammond.

Mary Crosby explained the family realized that an entire generation had not heard her father's music and that it is just as pertinent and important today as when he recorded it. Maria Ferrer told the story of singing "Slow Boat to China" as a child with Bing at the Uris Theater until Rosie showed up to finish the rehearsal. "She was his buddy," Maria said, "the only woman who was one of the guys. And they sang in the same key."

In the 1930s, office boy A.C. Lyles was in awe of Paramount's biggest star, Bing Crosby, and his ears would perk up when he'd hear Bing bicycling around the lot, singing and whistling. One day, A.C., upon hearing

Bing, grabbed his bicycle and followed his idol. But he made a mistake and broadsided Bing when he turned and they both ended up on the pavement. Bing asked, "What's the matter kid? What didn't you like, the song or the singer?" Later on, Bing would ask for A.C. to escort guests around the lot. Adolph Zukor, Paramount's studio boss said Bing was very praiseworthy of the youngster. Bing's favorable mentions got A.C. a nice position in Paramount's publicity department.

From childhood on, Richard M. Sherman adored Bing Crosby. "His acting, singing, he was my hero."

Maureen Solomon with Richard Sherman

He recalled, "I almost fell off my chair when they asked me and my brother to do a special, '*Goldilocks*,' with Bing and his family. He was the most professional man I ever encountered, so prepared, so hip, he could do it all. He was demanding of himself, but he did not labor because it was easy for him to do it all in one take. It was an absolute honor and he was a joy to work with." When it came time to do the recordings, Sherman's dad, songwriter Al Sherman came by and sat in the booth above. Bing spotted the elder Sherman in the booth and called to him, "Al,...*your* boys?"

"Dad nodded, and Bing nodded and gave him a 'thumbs up.' That was the man," Sherman said as he choked up telling this story. At the reception I asked him to tell it again and he was just as effusive the second time. "I'll never forget it, as long as I live," he said.

Mitzi Gaynor took to the stage last with a funny, diva-type entrance that was very engaging. In 1954 producer George Abbott wanted her for a part in the upcoming Broadway production, *Damn Yankees*, when her husband Jack Bean told her he had signed her to a Paramount contract. Her first picture was going to be *Anything Goes*, with Bing. When Mitzi arrived at the studio lot she found a bicycle built-for-two outside her dressing room with a note that said, *"To Mitzi, from Bing Crosby. Thank you for leaving the 20th Century Fox salt mines."*

"Nobody ever talks about Bing's dancing," she said, "Bing was a good dancer!" Recording for the film was at 8AM and she arrived at 7:15. "Bing was already there, having a cup of coffee. Billy May did the arrangements and we were finished by 10."

She continued, "Bing was real. He was—what you see is what you get. He was such an intelligent man, so honest, funny, charming, and wise. He would sit with my husband and regale him with stories. They were so much alike. My husband was just crazy about him."

As a leading man she adored him, "He looked in your eyes when you worked with him. He was compelling. You felt like he was your friend and he would take care of you. He would make everything all right. He was romantic, sweet and fun – the kind of a person a woman would like to marry. Around Bing Crosby, everyone else was a *junior*. He would say hello and that's all you looked at. He was so generous. I loved him. I can't say that about any of my leading men, but I really loved Bing Crosby. And this show from Argentina, — was he fabulous or not!"

A clip from the recently discovered 1960 World Series game from Bing's basement was also shown.

The audience asked questions of the panelists about forthcoming Bing releases. One man told how he saw Bing in concert and at the end of the show he would throw the charts up into the air, across the stage. Mary talked briefly about the Christmas specials and said her father made sure all the proceeds from recordings he made of "Silent Night" go to Catholic charities to this day. On the last Christmas Special he did, which was aired after he passed in 1977, Mary told of Bing meeting David Bowie for the first time. Bowie and his wife came to the rehearsal in identical androgynous outfits. Bing eyed Bowie curiously. Bowie didn't want to sing "Little Drummer Boy" and Bing knew it. A new countermelody song, "Peace on Earth" was hastily written. As they rehearsed the new version, Bowie said he needed to sing the melody; he couldn't sing in the arranged key. Reassuring him, Bing said, "Don't worry, I'll find a way to get in there somehow."

Richard Sherman summed up the evening when he said, "One of the magical things about Bing which came across in everything he did was the fact that he loved what he did and did what he loved and you could feel it. He was very genuine because he truly had a good time singing. That's what he gave to us. And God gave it to him and he shared it with everybody... and we're very grateful to have a great talent like that in this world."

Was this a real Bing Love Fest? You bet!

Maureen Solomon

(Editor: Our sincere thanks to Maureen for the many hours she spent at the festival and for her wonderful, detailed report. Oh how we should have loved to have been there too!)

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of $3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Gord Atkinson, 14 Castle Harbour Crt., Ottawa, ON K2S 1B9, Canada.

Gord's *The Crosby Years* series of CDs remains available direct from him. US members can obtain the CDs for $16.00 US each which includes postage. Canadian purchasers should pay CAN $16.00 for each CD. Payment can be made by check or money order to Gord Atkinson. Please note that USA members may send US dollar checks.

UK, Irish and European members who wish to obtain the CDs should contact Malcolm Macfarlane. The CDs cost £10 each.

Michael Crampton, address on inside front cover.

Michael has a supply of the book "Alternate Bing Crosby" by Colin Pugh which was published in 1988. Running to 159 pages, it gives details of the many alternate takes Bing made. If you would like a copy, send £3.50 to Michael Crampton. Europe and Ireland members should send £4.50. Also Michael has many spare copies of old issues of BING magazine and please contact him if you would like to pick some up for a nominal figure. There are still some copies left of the excellent book covering Bing's TV appearances and Michael is offering these at the hugely discounted price of only £5.99 including postage.

Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, USA (Tel. & Fax: (952) 470-2172, e-mail: Fesfilms@aol.com – website: www.fesfilms.com/)

Ron Hall at Festival Films can meet all your NTSC requirements for Bing on DVD and video.

Harry Harrington, 62 Beckside Gardens, Chapel House, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE5 1BQ, UK, (tel. 0191 2642255)

During the course of clearing a late relative's house, Mr. Harrington came across the following:
"5 books / magazines titled "The Road to Bing Crosby" which seem to be the Bing Crosby Discography covering the years 1926 to 1966 (the last of these is titled The "V" Disc supplement)
2 editions of the Crosby Post and 1 booklet titled The Crosby Collector."
(Editor: The Road to Bing Crosby is a much sought after publication running to more than 300 pages. It was put together by Crosby experts Ralph Harding, Bob Roberts, Derek Parkes and Fred Reynolds and gives incredible detail about Bing's recording career up to and including 1966. Matrix numbers, labels, issue numbers, V-discs - it's all there and has to be seen to be believed. It was a limited edition of 150 copies and some of the purchasers had it bound into one attractive volume.)
Offers to Mr. Harrington please.

John Jolly, 4 Paddock Close, Godshill, Ventnor, Isle of Wight PO38 3JB, UK (Tel: 01983 840860, 07969 939298)

John would like to pass on a full set of "Bing's Hollywood' to an interested member. All are in plastic wallets and anyone interested should contact him to discuss. Any members visiting the Island are invited to call in for a chat!

The Record Centre, 43, Presthope Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 4NJ, UK (Tel: 0121-476-9619 [Tues/Wed & Fridays: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. only],
e-mail: Raypurslow@blueyonder.co.uk)

Mail Order only. Free lists available by email. Ray Purslow has always been a real supporter of the Crosby cause and for your Bing CDs, please contact Ray.

Worlds Records, P. O. Box 1922, Novato CA 94947, USA (phone: 1-800-742-6663) www.worldsrecords.com/

Try this company for CDs imported from the UK and elsewhere.

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Crosby Clubs Around the World

The ICC is very pleased to be associated with the Australian Bing Crosby Society. The society's details are:

The Australian Bing Crosby Society

Peter De Ryk, 11 Holden Rd., Kallista, Victoria 3791, Australia. (tel. [03] 9755 3013 – email: deryk@net2000.com.au)

Bi-monthly newsletters are issued and there are regular film nights. In December, the Crosby film was *The Bells of St. Mary's* supported by a Bob Hope Special *Hope for the Holidays*. The film shown on February 15 was *Pennies from Heaven* supported by a compilation *The Best of Danny Kaye*. Other film nights planned for 2011 are on 19 April; 21 June; 16 August; 18 October and 6 December. The venue is Mamma Vittoria's, 343 Smith St. (1st floor), Fitzroy, Victoria.

Internet sites:

www.BingCrosby.com

This comes under the Bing Crosby Enterprises banner and contains rare photos of Bing, radio shows, recordings and clips from Bing's films. A Bing Crosby Encyclopedia is planned for the site in due course.

Bing Crosby on Facebook

This also comes under the auspices of Bing Crosby Enterprises and Bing's Facebook page is at:

www.facebook.com/pages/Bing-Crosby/44544738326

Information taken from the book *Bing Crosby: Day By Day* is posted frequently. There is also a discussion facility.
The site reached 10,000 fans early in December when the

breakdown of them was 57% female, 43% male; 20 different countries and languages. As we went to press in late February, the number of fans had grown to nearly 12,000!

BING magazine

This site contains a considerable amount of reference material and Frans van der Kolff's incredible "Songography" and Keith Parkinson's magnificent "The A-Z of Bing's Movies" have recently been added. See www.bingmagazine.co.uk

A Bing Crosby Discography

Maintained by our member, J. Richard Baker (known as Jarbie), this excellent site can be found at:

http://tinyurl.com/BingCrosbyDiscography

Crosby Fan World

This bulletin board type site at:
http://crosbyfanworld.boardhost.com/
is developing nicely. Mature and knowledgeable contributions are being made and the site is sensibly moderated by Richard Baker. If you have any Bing news please consider making an entry on the site and if there are any Crosby matters you want to discuss, this is an ideal place to do so.

Books 'n' Bing

Frank: The Making Of A Legend

By James Kaplan, published by Sphere; (2010), Hard cover, 800 pages, £15.50 (Amazon) ISBN-10: 1847442617, ISBN-13: 978-1847442611

This new biography has the following description on the Amazon site.

Who was Frank Sinatra? And how did who he was lead to him creating such incomparable music? In FRANK, fans finally have a biography that goes more deeply into who he really was than any previous book about this extraordinary man. Sinatra was a bundle of contradictions. At once both spoiled and neglected by his tough, clever, insensitive parents, he grew up convinced of his special destiny and agonisingly lonely. He came to define modern manhood, yet in many ways he never grew up. In this book, we relive the years 1915 to 1954 in glistening detail, experiencing as if for the first time Sinatra's journey from the streets, his fall from the apex of celebrity, and his Oscar-winning return in From Here to Eternity. Here at last is the biographer who makes the reader feel what it was really like to be Frank Sinatra - with the biography that, finally, gets under his skin.

That probably gives you some idea of its tone and from the reviews and extracts your Editor has seen it seems a rather unpleasant kind of book. The *Daily Mail* newspaper in the UK has been serialising extracts and Margaret Kliskey highlighted some relevant paragraphs covering Bing for us.

Radio was just coming into its own as a medium. Alone on his bed, young Frankie listened hungrily to opera, big bands and, above all, crooners such as Rudy Vallee and his favourite, Bing Crosby. He longed to be able to sing like Bing and believed he could.

As he moved into early adolescence, Frank was increasingly aware of how much more sensitive he was than other kids. Inside his head was a riot of emotions – happy to sad to miserable to ecstatic to bored, sometimes all within the space of a minute.

He was ashamed of these feelings, thinking them girly, so he kept this part of himself to himself. He also kept secret the thrill he felt at the sound of Crosby's voice and his certainty that Bing was speaking directly to him.

..Even Dolly got fed up. When she saw Crosby's picture on Frank's bedroom wall, she threw a shoe at her son and called him a bum.

Next, Martin McQuade takes a look at another new book.

2. The Guest List

By Ethan Mordden, published by St. Martin's Press, September, 2010. 9.3 x 6.1 x 1.3 inches, 336 pages, Plus one 8-page b&w photo insert, hardcover $19.79 (Amazon), E-book $14.99. ISBN: 978-0-312-54024-1, ISBN10: 0-312-54024-8,

Bing is afforded a brief appraisal in a new book by pop culture historian Ethan Mordden entitled *The Guest List* and subtitled, *"How Manhattan Defined American Sophistication from The Algonquin to Truman Capote's Ball."* The book details the era from the twenties to the sixties when New York City was the art deco capital of elegance and sophistication. In a chapter devoted to cabaret legends, Mr. Mordden's offers these statements.

"Ethel Waters' break with the more conventional vocal styles of the Jolson school coincided with two other extremely influential musicians, Louis Armstrong and Bing Crosby. No wonder; all three found their individual voices just when the microphone was introduced, in the mid-1920's. This allowed music makers to tone down, so to say. They let electricity do their projecting while they enlightened music with niceties that would have been ineffective back when filling auditoriums was the singer's first responsibility. Crosby's reputation is paradoxical, because his movie persona is lazy while his singing – though only in his early years – is very athletic, filled with games and curlicues. He'll launch a phrase with a single note that unfolds like a fan and he is absolutely obsessed with the upper mordent. Louis Armstrong's influence is more abstract, as it depends on his playing as well as his singing... Three great progenitors of pop music's lingua franca: yet Waters is unique in her "other" identity as actress, for neither Crosby nor Armstrong rivaled her as such. Crosby of course played many movie roles, mainly in his charming, "just me" persona but also a few genuine dramatic challenges. Still, nothing that Crosby

did compares to Waters' serious parts; and Crosby never dared the stage. Armstrong film appearances offer not acting but rather his ebullient music-making self."

Evidently, there are "curlicues" in Mr. Mordden's reasoning, for he fails to see the art behind "the lazy;" and he devalues the precise alchemy entailed in the creation of a great star's screen image. He assumes that this is interchangeable with the star himself, as if there had ever been "a Bing Crosby type of being" before Bing himself carefully minted it. Neither has Mr. Mordden heard much of the later Crosby. This would explain his failure to notice the athleticism – and muscular dexterity - of so many virtuoso performances, including those made with Louis Armstrong, among others.

Martin McQuade

Addendum to *Zing a Little Zong*, The Rhythmaires Profile in issue # 147 of BING.

On the March 30, 1949 broadcast of *Philco Radio Time*, Bing introduces "Sunflower" by naming the female Rhythmaires. Diane Pendleton's name is among them. Diane was overlooked in my Rhythmaires profile. (*BING* #147) Diane was a member of Kay Kyser's band, as were Jud Conlon, Charlie Parlato, Gloria Wood and Loulie Jean Norman. Indeed, she is prominently featured in two Kyser films: *Around the World* and *Carolina Blues*. She was part of the *Hollywood Cavalcade of Stars* War Bond Drive in 1943. Her performance, along with Gloria Wood and Betty Allan, of "The Boogie Woogie Bakery Boy," in the 1962 Disney featurette, *Symposium on Popular Songs*, is a textbook of close harmony singing which pays special homage to The Andrews Sisters. Diane died in 1969.

Martin McQuade

Bing Crosby Holiday Film Festival

The fifth annual Bing Crosby Holiday Film Festival in Spokane on December 11 was the most elaborate festival presented by the Advocates for the Bing Crosby Theater since Kathryn Crosby performed her cabaret show in 2006, the year the Clemmer Theater was renamed.

In addition to the showing of Crosby films – including "White Christmas" – the festival featured the first-time viewing of some of the photos from the Ron Bosley Collection, one of the world's largest collections of Crosby photos, recently purchased by Spokane's Jerry Dicker.

Also, on loan from the Rosemary Clooney House in Augusta, Ky., the uniform Crosby wore in "White Christmas" and a red robe entertainer Rosemary Clooney wore in the film were displayed in the lobby of the theater.

(l to r) Ed Crosby, Carolyn Schneider and Howard Crosby alongside Bing's uniform from *White Christmas*.

Robert Bader of Los Angeles, curator of Bing Crosby's personal archives, gave a presentation at 3:30 p.m. in which he showed some rarely seen and unseen footage of Crosby (including his 1968 return visit to Spokane). And Crosby's niece Carolyn Schneider of Las Vegas and nephew Howard Crosby of Walla Walla shared remembrances of their famous uncle.

"We went all out this year to honor the memory of the entertainer who grew up here and whose influence was felt worldwide – and all began on the stage of the theater that now bears his name," said Bill Stimson, president of the nonprofit Advocates for the Bing Crosby Theater.

The program comprised:
11 a.m. Movie "White Christmas" (introduced by Stephanie Plowman)
1:30 p.m. Movie: "Road to Morocco" (introduced by Stephanie Plowman)
3:30 p.m. Films from Bing's private archive
5 p.m. Documentary: "The Legendary Bing Crosby"
6 p.m. Bing's niece Carolyn Schneider: "Bing & WWII"
6:30 p.m. Nephew Howard Crosby: songs and stories
7:30 p.m. Movie: "White Christmas"

Carolyn Schneider sent us a report on what was obviously a superb Crosby event.

Reflections on the Bing Crosby Film Festival

Although the event was scheduled to begin at 11 am for the showing of the first film, the doors of the theater were to be opened at 10 am to allow viewing of the Ron

Bosley collection, and the two costumes on display. However, at 9:15 am, an eager crowd had gathered outside the entrance, and with noses pressed against the windows, was begging to be let in and get things started. A light snowfall on the ground had put everyone in the mood for "White Christmas". One of the most obvious features of these theatergoers is that everyone was smiling, that "Crosby feeling" takes over the minute they arrive. Also, this year more of the younger generations were in attendance than in the past, indicating that the message of Uncle Bing's importance and influence to the world of music is getting through.

My husband and I were seated at a long table in the lobby area, offering my book for sale, and being available to visit with those who wanted to chat. Quite a few people came by to tell me stories of what Uncle Bing meant to them and their family, heartwarming tales about the man from Spokane who never forgot his childhood friends.

I was in an excellent position to have an overall view of the event and activities. Many people, with cider and Christmas cookies in hand, took time to stop and look at each framed photo in the Bosley exhibit. Visitors who had brought a camera also enjoyed having their picture taken with the costumes from *White Christmas*.

Each year, the Bing Crosby Film Festival offers the public a refresher course in the life and times of their hometown celebrity, lest they forget. I believe that the Festival is a vital part of the many things that help to keep Uncle Bing's legacy alive. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to the Advocates of the Bing Crosby Theatre for their hard work and dedication towards this goal.

Carolyn Schneider

(Editor: Carolyn has been very busy indeed in recent months with various book signing sessions for her tome "Bing: On the Road to Elko" including one at the Nevada State Museum in Las Vegas on November 13 and another at the prestigious Library Tree Lane Gala on December 3 in Henderson. She also had the following article published by the Reno Gazette-Journal on November 7, 2010.)

As Veterans Day approaches, niece remembers Bing Crosby's service to soldiers

Bing Crosby was a great American and a great friend to the military. He was 38 years old when World War II started and was a well-known celebrity living in Hollywood. As a married man with children, he didn't qualify for the Selective Service, yet he was anxious to show his support for the war effort and even remarked in a news interview that he "felt foolish" for not being in uniform.

So when the opportunity presented itself to contribute to the cause, he jumped at the chance. A request came out of Washington, D.C., for performers to entertain the troops and boost morale, Bing went into action, answering the call with his time and talent.

He began his volunteer service by performing in shows at various training camps for servicemen that were preparing to go to war. These camp shows, or traveling theatres, were organized by the USO. Bing was a leader when it came to appearing at the military bases and had his first taste of a GI audience as he toured the camps in California.

Bing's down-to-earth personality and selection of familiar songs made him a favorite with the soldiers, and every show was packed. He had a great deal of admiration and respect for the boys, he really loved to sing for them, talk to them, and make them laugh. Little did he imagine that before long he would be at the fighting front singing "White Christmas" for the troops.

Over there

Crosby teamed up with a USO Overseas Unit, and he soon received his notice to leave for Europe in August, 1944. Once the departure date was set, the USO unit sailed out of New York harbor on board the SS Ile de France, which had been converted into a troop transport, holding 10,000 men. Bing gave four shows a day to the servicemen on board during the five-day crossing to Scotland. He entertained 2,500 soldiers at a time on the voyage, until all the GIs had heard him sing and deliver some lighthearted banter, usually about his cohort, Bob Hope.

Traveling by train to London, Bing reported to the American Army Headquarters. One of his early military performances in England was for the 381st Bomb Group of the United States Air Force. This time, it was on a make-shift stage in a hangar, and he strolled out singing "Swinging on a Star." He was doing his show with a B-17 parked in the background and members of its air crew sitting on the wings of the plane—plus any other space they could find. He entertained 4,000 soldiers that day, and it was the most successful concert the air base ever had.

Soon thereafter, Bing was flown to France on a C-47 to Cherbourg where he entertained at an Army hospital and met up with Fred Astaire who joined his troupe. Later, the singer reported that during his extensive overseas tour, without fail, the GIs requested that he sing "White Christmas" because it reminded them of home. Of course he complied, but it was a tough performance for him, because half his audience would be in tears.

He went anywhere and everywhere that American boys were fighting, at some of his shows the GIs would be sitting on the ground holding their rifles, at other times they would stand for the entire performance. Conditions for putting on a show were less than ideal, Bing and Dinah Shore sang to the troops from the bed of a truck. One show used a temporary stage, lit entirely

with flashlights.

No star treatment

Bing always preferred to be thought of as a "regular guy," and during his European tour, he often joined in the chow line and ate with the men. He usually performed on stage wearing Army fatigues and a cap—looking for all the world like the soldiers in his audience—and with his hands in his pockets. He was very popular with the men and he sang for them in a bombed-out factory, field hospital and outdoor pasture. In England he dodged the buzz bombs, and in France, the German tanks,

Bing signs autographs for front line troops in France.

When their European tour was over, Bing and Fred Astaire returned home aboard the RMS Queen Mary, which also served as a troop carrier during wartime. The boat was crammed with servicemen, some were of the bomber group that was being transferred to the Pacific, and a few lucky ones were going home on leave. All of them were so tired they just dropped down anywhere on the deck to grab some sleep. Bing, Astaire and the others did a few shows for the boys during the crossing, including in the hospital wards for the many returning wounded.

Upon his return stateside, Bing was questioned about his two months of being with the nation's fighting men:

"It was the most satisfying and rewarding experience of my career," he said.

He continued his assignment after his return, entertaining and comforting the war-wounded in hospitals with songs and chatter.

Bing Crosby became such a closely connected image to World War II through his patriotism, dedication, USO shows and war-bond rallies, that he was considered by many to be the "Voice of America." In fact, during the signing of the Japanese surrender aboard the USS Missouri, an officer was overheard to say, "All we need now is Bing Crosby here to sing a couple of songs and this would be perfect!"

They probably would have asked for "White Christmas."

Carolyn Schneider

Note: Nevada resident Carolyn Schneider is author of the book "Bing: On the Road to Elko" about her uncle Bing Crosby and his 15 years as a Nevada cattle rancher. She may be contacted at: *artist71635@msn.com*.

Hear Bing Crosby at his best

Nick Thomas, writing in the San Francisco Chronicle on December 26, described an interesting interview with Harry Crosby.

The Bing Crosby estate has released a wad of new material from the crooner. Several CDs, a DVD collection of television specials, and even a 7-inch record for vinyl lovers have all been dug out of the Crosby vault in Northern California, where Crosby lived and, of course, founded the now-titled AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am. Crosby's career as a singer, actor, business entrepreneur and sportsman spanned more than a half century. He died in 1977 from a stroke on a golf course near Madrid. Despite a car accident last month that seriously injured Crosby's second wife, Kathryn Crosby, 77, and killed her husband, Maurice William Sullivan, their son Harry Crosby took time out to remember his father and recalls one family TV special featuring his mother, siblings Mary and Nathaniel, and special guest David Bowie. The interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Q: Is there really a Crosby vault?

A: It was the basement of the family home in Hillsborough, where I grew up. My father saved a huge amount of his old radio shows, songs and television footage - some of which hasn't been seen or heard for decades. Robert Bader, from Bing Crosby Enterprises, has the daunting task of cataloging it all and transferring it to digital form for preservation. So we'll be releasing more material over time.

Q: Did your dad spend much time at the Hillsborough home?

A: He spent a lot of time at home with us. He was on the road less in the '60s, when I grew up, than he had been in previous decades. He loved golf, so we spent a lot of time at the local golf clubs. I was a big Giants fan, and Dad was part owner of the Pittsburgh Pirates, so we were always at games together. When the Pirates were playing, someone would come over to me and give me a mitt and ball, which was cool. But I was more impressed watching the two Willies - McCovey and Mays.

Q: In the '60s and '70s, the family produced

Christmas specials each year. Was that fun or did your parents drag you into it?

A: I loved it. Every September we got to get out of school for several weeks to do the shows and even traveled to England to record some of them. But apart from that, we really had more of a normal childhood than you would think. I took the bus to school, had my own friends, and we tried to be like the other kids. Of course, I realized my father was a popular entertainer, but I really just thought of him as my dad, friend and companion.

Q: What was Christmas like in the Crosby household?

A: You'd be surprised. He would actually startle our neighbors by taking the family out caroling. People would open their front doors and there would be Bing Crosby and family serenading them with Christmas carols. Many were friends, but he would also wander down the road, pick out a house and say, "Let's bang on that door." What a Christmas surprise it was for some families. But apart from that, we had a very traditional Christmas. We went to church in the morning, came back for lunch, opened gifts, and leading up to it there was a lot of singing. My mother made sure that we also wrote thank-you notes to the people who sent us gifts.

Q: The DVD collection features Bing's final TV appearance in the 1977 "Bing Crosby's Merrie Olde Christmas," where he sings the "Peace on Earth/Little Drummer Boy" duet with David Bowie. Do you remember that show?

A: Like it was yesterday. The most creative aspect of that show was to mix David Bowie's modern style with my father's traditional music. Despite their age difference, Dad and David hit it off immediately. "Little Drummer Boy" is a timeless Christmas ballad, and for two singers with such different musical styles to blend so well - so simply and purely - was a testament to both their talents. They rehearsed the number once and recorded it. The arrangement was terrific, and it has been a popular YouTube clip for ages. David was a wonderful guy. Dad wasn't intimately familiar with his music, but he followed all styles of music and had enormous respect for David. It was a shock to all of us when Dad died suddenly, just a few weeks after recording the Christmas show.

Nick Thomas

Bing 'N' Bowie

The Bing and David Bowie duet appeared all over the place during the Christmas season as usual and there was also a version on YouTube properly authorised by HLC Properties which has been viewed on more than 658,000 occasions. Also we understand the Bing/Bowie duet on iTunes was downloaded "tens of thousands of times." The ongoing success of this duet is quite outstanding and just could not have been foreseen back in 1977.

In addition this time, there were a couple of adaptations to entertain the masses.

Actors Will Ferrell and John C. Reilly recreated the now iconic duet for the *Funny or Die* web site and they stuck fairly closely to the original until the finale when "Bing" and "Bowie" fell out and "Bowie" pushed the Christmas tree over. The version on the web site had over 1.3 million viewings!

The other new revision was recorded and released by actors Jason Segel and Jack Black to benefit the charity "Blue Star Families". An animated video of the pair was placed on the comedy site *College Humor*, beginning with Segel arriving at Black's house requesting some ginger, before spotting a piano. When Segel asks to play a song, Black says: "I must warn you, that piano's been sprinkled with magic winter dust by Santa Claus himself. When one plays it during this joyous season, things can get pretty freakin' awesome." The Black and Segel version is available to download on iTunes and the animated version on YouTube had over 840,000 viewings.

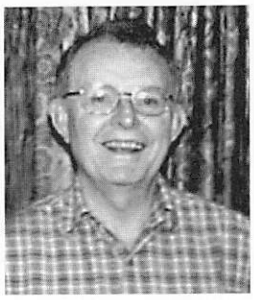
On Christmas Eve, the ABC-TV program *Nightline* showed an interview with the writers of the "Peace on Earth" segment - Buz Kohan, Larry Grossman and Ian Fraser. They indicated that the segment took about 20 minutes to write and excerpts from new versions were shown. Buz Kohan appeared to have had his beard trimmed especially for the occasion and your editor emailed him about this with the following response.

"It was an interesting experience. Even though I have been in television for over a half century, I keep forgetting how much control sits in the editor's chair. They can tell any story they choose, but fortunately, this one wasn't bad. It was the result of about a 20 minute interview with us, and they shot the little piece with five cameras. That's more firepower than I had in the early days with whole TV specials. I just had a haircut coincidentally the day before, and my tonsorial specialist is a little too gung-ho with the trimmer, her theory being, "it will always grow back."

It's amazing what's been going on with the song. In addition to the two new versions mentioned in the piece, there is also a version you might have heard that was recorded in England by a group called The Priests. The group consists of three genuine Roman Catholic priests who sing beautifully and have sold over 3 million records with their other releases. This CD is called "Noel" and our little song also features the questionable vocal talents of a member of The Pogues, who looks like they just picked him up off the street in SoHo. Anyway, who am I to stand in the way of that lofty combination of religion and commerce? More power (divine and otherwise) to them all. Nice to hear from you and hope you are having a wonderful holiday season. All good wishes for the New Year!

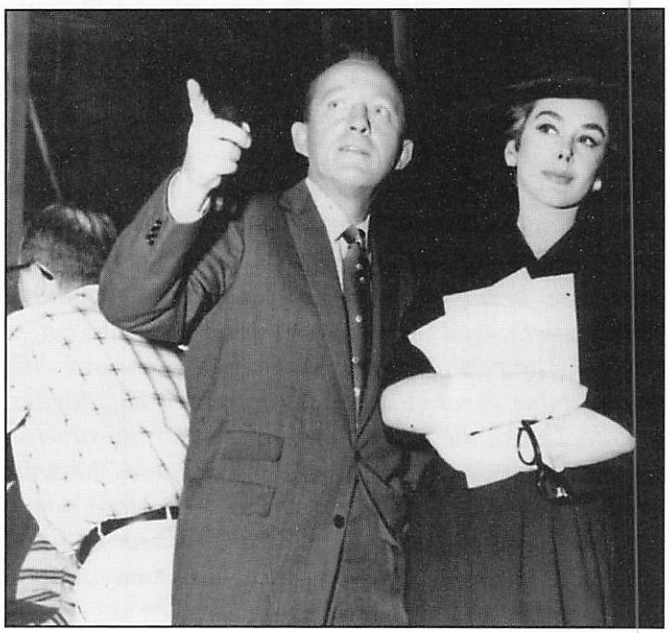
Buz Kohan

Celluloid Crosby



Although I still have a serviceable VCR machine I'm gradually replacing my clunky VHS tapes with DVDs. Because there is no great urgency to upgrade my Crosby movie collection I usually wait until a DVD either becomes available at a bargain price or the DVD extras promise something worthwhile. When I bought my Region 2 copy of *High Society* the enticement was a documentary called "Cole Porter in Hollywood: True Love" narrated by Celeste Holm. In addition there was a newsreel of the premiere of *High Society,* the film's theatrical trailer and the Cinemascope cartoon *Millionaire Droopy*. Well, the somewhat breathless Celeste Holm provided little insight into the background to the film, I didn't bother watching the trailer and the cartoon had no relevance to the feature. That left the newsreel clip of the film's premiere and that did not dwell on a stunt I read about which illustrated the extremes the Hollywood studios once went to for publicity purposes.

Apparently the major studios employed one man - Frank Whitbeck - to stage-manage important film premieres. For the Los Angeles opening of *High Society* at Pantages Theatre all the day-old flowers in the florists' shops in the area were bought up. The petals were then blown from the roof of the cinema onto the arriving guests. It was an expensive operation because of the cost of hoisting equipment onto the roof of the theatre for one night. Added to which, *High Society* could stand on its cinematic merits without the need for crude showmanship. That was proved at the premiere when the audience wildly applauded the Crosby/ Armstrong duet of "Now You Has Jazz".



Kay Kendall and Bing meet on the M-G-M lot.

Public acclaim was nothing new to Bing after a quarter of a century in films and recording. Yet it must have been far more satisfying to receive praise and adulation from others in show business. In his autobiography, Leslie Phillips recalls filming *Les Girls* with Kay Kendall. They were on the M-G-M lot in Hollywood when Bing arrived carrying a package tied up in pink ribbon. This was around the time that *High Society* was filming on another soundstage. Bing handed the package to Kay Kendall. It turned out to be a 78 of "Love in Bloom". Bing had heard that Kay was a fan and that she had been seeking a recording of the song. Kay Kendall was on the brink of international fame when she died of leukaemia three years later at the age of 33.

I've covered the making of *High Society* previously so I'm concentrating on what happened after that August 1st, 1956 premiere. First come the reviews. The Hollywood Citizen News on the day following the film's opening commented on the musical aspects of the film. Lowell E. Redelings wrote:

> *"Sinatra is a trifle wooden at times, but in the vocal department he shines in a couple of duets with Grace, and also with Miss Holm and with Crosby. The latter not only has some of the film's cleverest lines, but is still tops in the song department, as he proves time and time again."*

Did Redelings see an unedited print of the film? Sinatra duetting twice with Kelly!

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences naturally took an interest in one of the better pictures of 1956 when it came to award time. But not too close an interest. Their documentation under the category **Writing (Motion Picture Story)** contains the entry:

> *High Society. Allied Artists. Edward Bernds and Ellwood Ullman. (Withdrawn from ballot)*

What's that about? *Variety* headlined it "The biggest boo-boo in Academy nomination history". Two clangers had been dropped. First of all, *High Society* was ineligible for nomination in a writing category because it was not an original story but an adaptation of Philip Barry's *Philadelphia Story*. That was a stage play which was eventually filmed by M-G-M in 1940. However, the main embarrassment was the Academy's confusion of M-G-M's lavish musical with Allied-Artists similarly titled *High Society* which starred the Bowery Boys. Ullman and Bernds had indeed written that 61 minute 'B' picture but Oscar material it was not. In fact, the winning film in the writing category would result in further embarrassment for the Academy. Robert Rich was awarded the Oscar for his work on *The Brave One*.

Deborah Kerr presented the award to Jesse Lasky Jr. in the absence of Rich. Lasky was the vice president of the Writers' Guild and he probably knew why Rich was a no show. There was no Robert Rich. It was a pseudonym of Dalton Trumbo. Trumbo was a blacklisted writer and as such was "unemployable". The communist witchhunts had branded Trumbo one of the "Hollywood Ten" in 1947. Because of being labelled a red sympathiser by the House Unamerican Activities Committee none of the major studios would knowingly employ Trumbo. He did not write under his own name until 1960.

Returning to *High Society* and the Academy Awards for 1956, Cole Porter's "True Love" was nominated under the **Music (song)** category. It lost out to "Whatever Will Be, Will Be" which was performed in front of the Pantages audience by Gogi Grant. But Bing was responsible for an Academy Award first that year. Since 1945 it had been customary for the nominated songs to be performed live at the Awards presentation ceremony. The 1946 ceremony had two Crosby songs in the running: "Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive" and "Aren't You Glad You're You". Bing was expected to sing both on the night but at the last minute he bowed out. As a result neither song received an airing. The winner that year was "It Might As Well Be Spring" from *State Fair* which Dick Haymes performed. 1956 was the first year the Academy relaxed the live performance ruling and allowed a film clip of "True Love" to be slotted in between the four live songs up for an award.

I don't intend to speculate on the relationship between Bing and his female co-star Grace Kelly. They had known each other professionally for a couple of years and there was an undoubted rapport. But *High Society* indirectly put paid to any further showbusiness relationships between Grace and her leading men. This followed M-G-M giving Kelly leave of absence from her contract with the studio so that she could travel to Cannes to promote Paramount's *The Country Girl*. That Crosby-Kelly picture was being presented at the annual film festival held there. Her transatlantic journey to Europe resulted in an introduction to Prince Rainier. You know the rest.

To me, on screen Grace Kelly always came over as a regal lady. Whether in the western *High Noon* or the Hitchcock thriller *Dial M for Murder* she had the aura of a princess. Now she was able to play the part in real - as opposed to reel-life. Bing did not attend the Rainier wedding in Monaco. However, a Los Angeles newspaper reported that Bing's wedding gift took the form of a trailer home. Bing was part owner of Blue Skies Trailer Park in Palm Springs and the Rainiers were given what was described as "a miniature palace on wheels." A tarted up caravan has limited appeal to me having spent a wet week nose to nose with a young family in what is, after all, a shed on wheels. But no doubt the royal couple could sell on their unusual wedding gift along with duplicated toast racks and assorted cutlery.

High Society enjoyed worldwide popularity at a time when both leisure activity and popular music were undergoing upheaval. In the latter part of the 1950s the impact of television had not affected the cinema going habit in every civilised country. In Sweden there had been an embargo on building cinemas since the end of World War II. This was lifted in 1954 and because television did not reach that country until 1956 new cinemas were opening on a fairly regular basis. The Svea in Soderhamn opened on 23rd October, 1957. The operators wanted to book the best crowd puller they could find as the opening attraction. It was *En Scon Historia* after the sub-titlers got to work on *High Society*.

But a major change in popular entertainment did reverberate throughout the western world. 1956 saw rock and roll gaining a hold that altered popular music forever after. Radio, television, film and recording, would all be influenced one way or another when youth influenced what had been regarded a family entertainment until the mid-1950s. It would take a film like *High Society* to prove that traditional musical values could live on. In 1956 the film took $6.5m in North America. $5.8m was the box office take in the USA alone. Competition for the entertainment dollar came from rock's two main exponents that year: Elvis Presley and Bill Haley. Both made their film debuts in 1956. Presley starred in *Love Me Tender* whilst Haley headlined in *Rock Around the Clock*. *High Society's* $5.8m take was more than the combined ticket sales of *Love Me Tender* and *Rock Around the Clock* in the United States.

Keith Parkinson

THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES

WHEN I TAKE MY SUGAR TO TEA Song. Bing sang this Irving Kahal, Pierre Norman and Sammy Fain song on film during the year it was composed. We hear it at the start of the Mack Sennett short *Dream House* (1931) when Bing sings it whilst preparing to meet his date. The same sequence was incorporated into the compilation film *Road to Hollywood* in 1946. Bing waited until the 1950s to feature it regularly on radio with accompaniment from the Buddy Cole Trio.

WHEN THE FOLKS HIGH-UP DO THE MEAN LOW DOWN Song. Irving Berlin didn't always turn out masterworks. At least Bing couldn't take all the blame when he was joined by Bebe Daniels and June McCloy to perform the song in the lounge of an ocean liner for the film *Reaching for the Moon* (1931).

WHEN THE MOON COMES OVER MADISON SQUARE Song. Supposedly composed by Bing and Mary Martin according to the plot of *Rhythm on the River* (1940). When Bing sings it for a song publisher the song is dismissed as being too like the work of songwriter Oliver Courtney (Basil Rathbone) for whom Bing fronts as a ghost writer. In reality it was written by Johnny Burke and James V. Monaco.

WHERE IS CENTRAL PARK Song. Johnny Burke and James V. Monaco wrote this for Bing to sing in *Sing You Sinners* (1938). Bing made a recording and it must have looked a certainty to be featured in the picture because the song was assigned a matrix number (79398-1). Then it was dropped. It was not the strongest song written for the film and Bing never made a studio recording of the song for Decca.

WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT MEETS THE GOLD OF THE DAY Bing's signature tune. It made its celluloid debut in 1932 when it was the main song in the Sennett short *Blue of the Night*. It was already popular and acknowledged as being the property of Bing Crosby. As such, it neatly tied up the film's plot with Bing convincing a policeman that he was who he said he was by singing the song, which he co-wrote with Roy Turk and Fred E. Alhert.

The sequence was included in the 1949 compilation film *Down Memory Lane*. When Bing's film career was being built by Paramount Pictures they cast him in the 1932 feature *The Big Broadcast* where he sang his signature tune at the film's commencement. Bing recorded the song four times for Decca, the 23rd November, 1931 version being the one that should be your desert island selection.

WHIFFENPOOF SONG, THE Song. Bing recorded this George S. Pomeroy, Ted Galloway and Meade Minnigerode composition in 1947 and featured it on screen in 1950 in *Riding High* and three years later in *Road to Bali*. On both filmic outings it was used to amuse. In the first film Bing, Raymond Walburn and William Demarest sing it in the hope of being thrown out of a restaurant before it is revealed that they cannot pay for their food. In *Bali,* Bing and Bob are in Australia and sing a few lines of "The Whiffenpoof Song" in a gag sequence where a field of sheep provide the "baa-baa-baas".

WHISTLER AND HIS DOG, THE Song. Bing whistled this Arthur Pryor song with confidence as he entered the Schonbrunn Palace together with his dog in an early sequence in *The Emperor Waltz* (1948). Later in the film, he whistles it again as he leaves the Emperor's presence.

WHITE CHRISTMAS Film. At the time of its release in 1954, this was Paramount's most expensive film musical and Bing's highest grossing movie. It was Paramount's most ambitious project of 1953, being budgeted at $4million. Full use was made of four of Paramount's soundstages. The film's advance publicity was taken care of by Irving Berlin's title song which had become the best selling recording of all time as recorded by Bing. The film's appeal was strengthened by movie buffs wanting to take a look at the VistaVision process developed by Paramount. And Danny Kaye was still riding high in the popularity stakes when he took on the role of Bing's buddy after Fred Astaire and then Donald O'Connor became unavailable. In a shrewd business deal, Kaye joined Bing and Irving Berlin in a profit sharing arrangement which gave them 70% of net takings. In addition, Berlin received a fee of $300,000 for the use of his music. Michael Curtiz could have also taken a cut but opted for a flat $175,000 as director. Rosemary Clooney was paid $5,000 per week. The film's other seasonal song apart from the title song was "Snow", which was sung on screen by the film's four stars, Crosby, Kaye, Rosemary Clooney and Vera-Ellen, although Vera-Ellen was dubbed by Trudy Stevens. Berlin realised that the film would benefit by having a new winter-type song and raided his bottom drawer for a discarded manuscript from his 1950 Broadway hit "Call Me Madam". Originally titled "Free" that song was dropped from "Call Me Madam" when audiences failed to respond to it. Berlin substituted "You're Just in Love", which turned out to be the show's hit song. In the U.S.A *White Christmas* received its New York premiere at Radio City Music Hall on October 14, 1954. Its opening day receipts set a record for the time of $25,000. In the U.K. it was a 1955 hit, finishing number two at the box-office for that year, the number one film being *The Dambusters*. It had a major re-release in the USA in 1961 and in December 2008 it was shown at selected cinemas in the UK to sell-out audiences. Once the primary life of *White Christmas* as a cinema attraction was exhausted, it began new lives on

television, video, DVD and now Blu-ray (as you will read below). An excerpt from the book "The A-Z of Television" by Willis Hall and Bob Monkhouse which was published in 1971 deserves the last word:

Christmas is a three day television festival dedicated to the birth of Bing Crosby. In order to celebrate and commemorate the event, old Bing Crosby movies are screened on television without cessation for three solid days. Appropriately enough, the most popular old Bing Crosby movie on television is called "White Christmas".

WHITE CHRISTMAS Song. Introduced by Bing in the 1942 film *Holiday Inn* it became the title of a Paramount Picture twelve years later. In between times Bing performed it as part of a medley in the 1945 film *Blue Skies*. The song content of all three films had words and music written by Irving Berlin. For *Holiday Inn* it was showcased in a cosy scene where Marjorie Reynolds (dubbed by Martha Mears) shared vocals. For the 1954 film Bing provided a solo performance before it was reprised by the film's four principal actors. Apart from "Amazing Grace" by Steve Turner, "White Christmas" would seem to be the only other popular song which has been the subject of a book. That was "White Christmas - The Story of a Song" by Jody Rosen (2002).

WHITEMAN, PAUL (1890-1967) Bandleader, composer, arranger and violinist. He starred in the film which introduced moviegoers to Bing: *King of Jazz* (1930). By then he had already provided the listening public with the opportunity to hear the Crosby voice via phonograph recordings and radio. *King of Jazz* was a Whiteman showcase. His subsequent appearances were limited to guest shots in *Thanks a Million* (1935), *Strike up the Band* (1940), *Lady, Let's Dance* (1944), *Atlantic City* (1944), *Rhapsody in Blue* (1945) and *The Fabulous Dorseys* (1947). This is not the place to debate whether or not Whiteman was the king of anything, least of all jazz.

Keith Parkinson

(Editor: We are nearing the end of Keith's marathon listing and we had been considering publishing it as a book. However the price of a limited edition would make it rather expensive and we have therefore decided to place the entire A-Z on the BING magazine web site for use by researchers. Our thanks to Keith for a magnificent series which first started in our pages in 1989!)

Rediscovering Frank Capra

John Benstead drew our attention to a Frank Capra season at the **BFI Southbank** in London last November and December. The BFI's publicity stated:

Frank Capra, the most popularly acclaimed of all Hollywood film-makers, is best known for his legendary social comedies. We expand Capra's lost horizons in this comprehensive, two-part retrospective..Part Two of this retrospective, in December, looks at Capra's 30s social comedies, his wartime documentaries, the phenomenon of 'It's a Wonderful Life' and his post-war independent productions.

Part two included Capra's two Bing films which were described as follows.

Riding High
21 December / 28 December
His ailing independent production company, Liberty Films, now absorbed into Paramount, Capra resorted to remaking his pre-war horse race drama, *Broadway Bill*. It's kitted out with songs for its new star, Bing Crosby, but it thriftily revives much of Robert Riskin's script, some of the old action footage and a number of the supporting players from the first version. The theme is pure Capra: the triumph of honest endeavour against the forces of greed and corrupt big business. Oliver Hardy appears in a rare solo part.

Here Comes the Groom
22 December / 30 December
Capra chose Crosby again for his Paramount swansong, a lively and light-humoured romance in which Bing is a journalist who woos Jane Wyman, a former song-and-dance girl. The couple do a rendition of Johnny Mercer and Hoagy Carmichael's "In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening" strolling round an office desk, which won the composers a Best Song Oscar and makes one regret that Capra never attempted a full-scale musical. Louis Armstrong and Dorothy Lamour make guest appearances.

****

It was great to see Bing's films featuring in a major retrospective at this prestigious location. This is what Frank Capra had to say about the films in his autobiography.

> The first day of photography I gave a nine o'clock call to Clarence Muse, Coleen Gray, Skeeter the banty rooster, Broadway Bill the black stallion, and of course, to the Bingle.
>
> Nine o'clock—no Bing. I calmly began shooting around him with the other actors, improvising many new scenes. At ten thirty Bing showed up and found us busily shooting. I didn't say a word about time.
>
> "What's going on?" he asked me.
>
> "Just another little old picture, Bing."
>
> "I thought you said I was in the first shot."
>
> "We'll take your first shot whenever you're ready."

Next day, same occurrence. The Cassandras chortled. [Art] Black shook his head, "Told you he'd drive you nuts, boss." Again Bing found me shooting scenes when he came in at ten thirty.

"Frank, if I'm in the first shot, what're you shooting before I get here?" he asked.

"Bing, I've got some forty days to shoot a mil-and-a-half picture. That's at the rate of forty G's a day, or five G's per hour. Only way I can do it is to shoot from nine to six—constantly. So I start shooting at nine sharp with any actors that are around. If no actors show up, I invent scenes with dogs, cats, inserts, or actors I pick up on the streets."

No words, no arguments, no recriminations. Bing was an actor-business-man; he respected persons who got the job done without fuss or feathers. Also, he realized that if he didn't show up on time I would shoot with other actors.

Next morning Bing was on the set a half-hour earlier. Then—at nine. No word was said about it. He asked me what time I got on the set I told him seven thirty. "Why so early?" he asked. "To plan, rewrite, think of new 'business,'" He wanted to know when we ran the rushes. I told him the crews ran them at the studio at seven thirty in the morning, but I ran them alone at home in my projection room at 6 A.M. On many a subsequent morning Bing would knock on my front door at 6 A.M. to see the rushes with me. . . .

Bing Crosby is not an easy man to know. In virtually everything he does—golf, acting, crooning, and, I imagine, necking—he is as relaxed as a cat stretched out in the sun. But if you let that lazy, old-shoe casualness fool you into thinking the Bingle doesn't know what's going on—you're living in a dream world. His wit can devastate you, and what's more, you can't see it coming.

Coleen Gray watches Bing and Raymond Walburn play cards in *Riding High*. Clarence Muse is in the background.

In his coordination Crosby is in a class by himself. Most actors must stop everything they are doing with their hands, or with props, in order to deliver an important speech. Crosby can recite the Gettysburg Address while juggling three balls and listening to Hope crack toupee jokes.

Crosby is blessed with a photographic mind. He can learn a two-page speech by reading it twice. And usually whatever he changes or adds in the speech is better than what is written. For he is the master of the literary ad-lib.

(Frank Capra, writing in his book *The Name Above the Title*, page 407)

Bing's co-star Coleen Gray had a few things to say too.

Bing is a most surprising man. You think of him as a sportsman, interested only in golf, baseball, race-horses—but there's another side you'd never suspect. One day I saw him reading T. S. Eliot's "Notes toward the Definition of Culture," a deep, non-fiction book. Another time it would be a biography, another a work on world affairs.

Bing's ad libs are often cleverer than the script and he seems to enjoy them as much as everyone else. He transacts a lot of his business on the set, answering phone calls and dictating letters to a secretary in his trailer between takes. He is always surrounded by his radio-writers, gag-men and business associates. Often he would go off to the side of the set to discuss business deals with men who came to the studio to see him. All in all, I found Bing to be a happy, well-adjusted man. He's completely relaxed and simply will not be worried by anything. For instance, in the musical number we had to do together there was some confusion because the dance director gave us too many instructions at once. These instructions would probably have been simple for professional dancers, which Bing and I aren't. I was getting rattled and unhappy and could see that Bing was bothered, too. But did he allow it to upset him? Certainly not. He just said, "Hold on a minute. I can learn just one thing at a time." and we proceeded on that basis.

Incidentally, this dance sequence was the only uncomfortable episode of the picture for me. When you combine singing, remembering dance steps, ringing a cowbell and giving with the big smile and *relaxing* all at the same time, you really have something! But singing with Bing was a really happy experience. He *knows so* surely what he's doing that it gives you confidence you never knew you had. I always could sing my little heart out with my college choral group because I was just one among sixty and I felt safe. I'd never *dreamed* of daring to sing all by myself. But with Bing there it was different. He'd watch me and then, putting his hand on the back of my neck, he'd say, "Wait a minute. You're all tightened up. Relax, relax!"

. . . Perhaps we had so much fun because we

worked so hard. In one scene, Bing is supposed to return to me after having been away for two years. "You're glad to see him," Mr. Capra said. *"Leap* at him!" So I leaped. I not only knocked off Bing's hat—but I split every hook off my own skirt! After that he called me the Durable Dane and pretended to dodge and defend himself whenever I came around. "Don't ever make that girl mad!" he'd warn everybody. "She'll tear you to pieces!

There was a wonderful big party in the Paramount commissary for everybody and their best girl and beau when the picture finished, but it was a sad, sad day for me. Even though I got up and sang our favorite song, "Ghost Riders in the Sky," into the microphone, with Frank Capra strumming the accompaniment on his guitar, there was an undertone of parting in my heart that made the tears come very close to spilling over.

Bing left the party early so there weren't any goodbyes. He waved once across the commissary, but I've never had a chance to tell him in person how grateful I am. How can you thank a guy like that?

(Coleen Gray, writing in an unidentified film magazine in 1949)

And finally here are Mr. Capra's thoughts about *Here Comes the Groom*.

Frank Capra and Jane Wyman present Bing with a cake celebrating his 20 years as a solo artist during filming

Here Comes the Groom was noteworthy to me because of a song, the launching of a fourteen-year-old Italian girl's career, and the charming chemistry that developed from the performances of Bing Crosby and Jane Wyman. First, the song.

Much to my delight I discovered that Jane Wyman—short nose, long legs, big heart, and all talent—had a rarely used flair for singing and dancing (in films she started in the chorus line, second row). I *had* to have a great song for Jane to do with Bing. But you don't just find great songs lying around on shelves. Oh, no? We did.

Joe Sistrom (one of my earlier "fiddlers three") said: "Frank, got just the song you want. Been in Paramount's dead letter files for years. Johnny Mercer and Hoagy Carmichael wrote it for a Betty Hutton picture I was going to make about Mabel Normand, till it got the Balaban ax. I'll dig it up for you."

Back he came to my office and put a small try-out record on my record player. A gravelly voice scratched out: "This is Johnny Mercer singing 'Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening,' lyrics by Mercer and music by Hoagy Carmichael." Then Hoagy played the piano intro and Mercer sang: "In the cool, cool, cool of the evening, /Tell 'em we'll be there . . ."

That was it! Bing liked it, Asher liked it. It would be our big gag-comedy number. I hired my pal, dance director Charlie O'Curran (Patti Page's worse half), to work out a wild dance routine.

The news about "Cool, Cool" (it won the Academy Award for Best Song) was not that we recorded, simultaneously, the orchestra in the music stage and Bing and Jane on the live sets (with tiny radios in their ears to pick up the orchestra from antenna loops on the floor)—although *Film Daily* said we set a precedent: "Marking a first, Paramount's full orchestra yesterday recorded on the scoring stage while Bing Crosby and Jane Wyman simultaneously recorded Johnny Mercer's 'Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening' blocks away on Frank Capra's shooting set."

Nor was the news about the song the intricate technical job of photographing and recording Bing and Jane as they started their song and dance in a plush upstairs office, then, without a break, clowned and sang down a corridor, to the elevator, out the main lobby to the lighted street, and down the street to Jane's car. All in one take. All on one sound track—cameras and mikes in the office, the corridor, the elevator, the lobby, and the street, picking up actors as they came into view a la TV coverage—a distinctive bit of staging the actors and crews were deservedly proud of.

No, the news about the song was Jane Wyman—the way she traded in her crying towel for a glamour-girl's raiment, and became a dish to behold!

(Frank Capra, writing in his book, *The Name above the Title*, page 420)

Bing Crosby and a Joyous Time

And talking of *Here Comes the Groom*, remember the little girl in the film? She was Beverly Washburn and she is now 67 years of age. Beverly writes for *The Vegas Voice* a print, web and radio company

providing news for Nevadans over fifty. She had some nice memories of Bing in her column last November.

Here it is, November already. A time to be thankful for all that we have and to reflect on all of our blessings.

Aside from being thankful for being a part of The Vegas Voice, my health, wonderful family, friends and pets – just to name a few, one of the things I'm thankful for is having worked with **Bing Crosby**.

The year was 1951. I got a call from my agent saying I had won the part to play a French child orphan who would be adopted by Bing Crosby in a Paramount film called *Here Comes The Groom*. I remember my mother bursting into tears – as Bing Crosby had been her all time favorite. It was a joyous time for all of us.

Also in the cast was Jane Wyman, Franchot Tone and Alexis Smith; with cameos by Louie Armstrong, Cass Daley, Frank Fontaine and Dorothy Lamour.

I also recall they had wanted it to look like I didn't have my front teeth so I would look even younger, but since I did have my teeth, every morning I was sent into the make-up room where the make-up man actually put black paint on my front teeth so it would look like they were missing.

Beverly and Jacky Gencel with Bing in *Here Comes the Groom*.

Academy Award for Best Song

Although it wasn't really a box-office hit, it actually won the Academy Award that year for best song "In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening" written by Hoagy Carmichael and Johnny Mercer. The film was also directed by the famous director Frank Capra; but of course being only seven years old at the time, I wasn't aware of just how fortunate I was to have been a part of this film.

Bing Crosby was wonderful to me and even gave me a beautiful doll for Christmas. I named her "Dixie" after his first wife who died at the young age of 41 in 1952

As an adult, I was saddened to know of the "not so nice" book written about him by his son Gary. He painted a picture of a sort of "Daddy Dearest" father.

One of his twin sons, Phillip is the only one who came to his defense. Phillip's twin brother Dennis and his brother Lindsey both committed suicide. Sadly, Gary died of lung cancer in 1995.

Kind, Caring, and Gentle

Having worked with Bing whose nickname was "Der Bingle" (although I'm not sure how he got that name) it is hard for me to imagine him being anything like he was portrayed by Gary. For me he was kind, gentle, caring and thoughtful.

I even received a Christmas card from him every year until the time of his death in 1977.

Working with him every day for three months on the Paramount lot was truly one of the things I am most grateful for in life. His song "White Christmas" has sold over 100 million copies around the world

His epitaph (which he wrote), said *"He was an average guy who could carry a tune."* Average? Not by a long shot.

Until next time, remember: "Never do we stand taller than when we reach down to help someone up."

Beverly Washburn

(Beverly Washburn graced the silver screen as a child actress and is the author of *Reel Tears* which can be bought online at Amazon.com or ordered through Barnes & Noble or Borders bookstores. You can contact Beverly at: bjradell@hotmail.com.)

White Christmas Remains Holiday Favorite For Millions

There was a fair amount of media coverage about *White Christmas* being released on Blu-ray. Here's one review from HollywoodChicago.com on November 8 last.

Blu-ray Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – Irving Berlin's *White Christmas* with Bing Crosby and Danny Kaye was the #1 film of 1954 and has become an annual favorite for millions of families all the way back to the days before VHS. Paramount has released the musical charmer on Blu-ray with new special features along with a snowy 2-disc holiday DVD edition for those still waiting for Santa to bring them a Blu-ray player.

...I have to start with a little blasphemy that could mean coal in my stocking — I'm a huge musical fan and love a lot of the road movies of Crosby and Bob Hope but *White Christmas* is just okay. Some of the music is

great and the stars, especially a luminous Rosemary Clooney, are at the top of their game, but the story is pretty lackluster and Crosby and Kaye don't have the same chemistry with each other or with their romantic leads as the best of this kind of material.

While hearing and seeing Bing in HD sing the gorgeous title track is something musical fans should do, the overall film is not one of the best musicals of its period. I love the song "White Christmas" but you can keep "Sisters" and "Count Your Blessings Instead of Sheep." I recognize the cultural importance of *White Christmas* and, being a huge musical fan, can enjoy parts of it but I respect it more than actually like it.

Having said that, the Blu-ray and DVD editions do a notable job for fans of the film. The HD 1080p picture is a bit over-polished at times, making Bing and Danny look more plastic than they should. What some people don't realize about HD is that it's a matter of balance. If you just turn up the colors and polish the grain, people start to look more unnatural than they did in the days of DVD and *White Christmas* has a few of those moments where it just doesn't look right. And the audio has a few similarly frustrating issues. I suggest you switch over to the restored mono track, which sounds much clearer and more natural for the film.

The special features on *White Christmas* are notable for a 55-year-old film and many on the Blu-ray disc are in HD. The DVD edition comes in a larger-than-average box with fake snow in the front with lobby card reprints on the inside.

Rosemary Clooney is the star of the special features on the Blu-ray disc and she's a delight. The featurettes are all relatively brief and focused on different elements of the production...

Brian Tallerico
Content Director, HollywoodChicago.com
brian@hollywoodchicago.com

Editor: There were some other reviews too,

I'll admit it: I'm not one to move heaven and earth to catch up on these musicals from the '50s. I'll readily confess their importance in pop culture and everything, but watching Rosemary Clooney and Bing Crosby belting out ballads never made my bucket list. But my wife *loves* this movie, so I requested it for review and—ta-da!—came away pleasantly surprised.

White Christmas is a charming, sweet-natured excursion into the un-cynical movie-making of the days of yore. Everyone's happy, no one drops F-bombs, the romantic encounters don't transition into orgies, and nobody takes offense to the term "Christmas." Is it idealistic and syrupy? Sure, but sometimes, don't you want to kick back with your family and soak in an old-fashioned, inoffensive bath of good feelings and song and dance routines?

Crosby's ridiculously successful "White Christmas" song powers the enterprises, of course, but there's a genuinely sweet couple of storylines going on to make the film much more than a vehicle for the composition. Crosby and Clooney have some nice chemistry and the storyline with the General (and his enduring connection to the men he commanded) is patriotic and reverent to veterans, which makes me all warm and fuzzy during this Veterans Day.

Really, it's all about the singing and the dancing. There are plenty of numbers to choose from, and everyone is more than adept at reeling off the vocals and foot footwork (Vera-Ellen, in particular is a dancing dynamo, though it's a tad unsettling when you look at her waist, which is roughly the size of a Fruit Roll-Up). I could probably leave about as many as I take, but there's certainly no shortage of talent here and Bing Crosby's voice continues to astound me.

Classic movie—how does the Blu-ray measure up? Quite well, actually. The 1.78:1 rehabbed widescreen is a thing of beauty, bursting in color (rocking that Vistavision like no one's business) and swimming in a genuinely stunning amount of detail. Seriously, I've seen high-def versions of contemporary films that fall far short of the visual fidelity that Paramount has churned out for this disc. A clean, though front-loaded 5.1 DTS-HD Master Audio mix pushes the music pieces very well (the restored, original mono track is also available). Extras are plentiful and substantial: a Rosemary Clooney commentary track full of anecdotes, a recycled retrospective where Clooney looks back at the film and HD featurettes examining Clooney's Kentucky home, Bing Crosby's Christmas singing acumen, Danny Kaye's career, the composition of the "White Christmas" song and, finally, the live-action stage incarnation.

Judge David Johnson *(DVD Verdict web site)*

Carmela Amari was one who was quick to purchase the Blu-ray version and she reported to Steve Fay's Fan Forum as follows:

"I watched the movie last night on Blu-ray. Awesome! So clear and the colors are so beautiful!!! You notice every detail! Even materials that are used, like the velvet on the straw hats that Bing and Danny wear in the beginning. Background signs that were hard to read you can see clearly now. Bing's eyes and voice are more noticeable. I never thought I would notice a difference with this movie because I thought it couldn't get any clearer - boy was I wrong! It was the best DVD of the movie I've ever seen!!!"

The Merry Mutineers

Bert Bishop spotted a cartoon which features Bing which had passed us by. This is what he said on the Crosby Fan World site in February.

"A new one to me is a cartoon that I've not heard of or seen before. On the recommendation of Gary Giddins [from his new book on the cinema] I've bought a few DVDs he refers to and one of them is a box set of

Hammer movies that has extras, one of which is a Color Rhapsody cartoon dating from 1936 which is entitled *The Merry Mutineers*. Basis of the short film is two boys sailing their 'pirate ships' on a pond and turn to attack each other. Close up of the ships' crews reveals famous film stars including Bing as a sailor painting a mast - a pinch from *Anything Goes* of the same year. Bing changes into a 'mammy' character when he gets covered in paint. Other celebrities include The Three Stooges Wallace Beery, Charles Laughton [as Capt. Bligh], W.C. Fields, The Marx Bros., Jimmy Durante, Laurel & Hardy, Fred Astaire, Joe E. Brown, George Arliss. Is this film familiar to anyone? Another recent DVD purchase, *Blues in the Night*, has extras including *Swooner Crooner*. I have heard of this cartoon but never seen it and assume it is known among other Crosbyphiles. Excellent that these Crosby orientated cartoons are being issued!"

Well, Keith Parkinson had in fact listed *The Merry Mutineers* in his A-Z of Bing's Movies under "Cartoons" but I had forgotten this with the passage of time. The cartoon is also recorded on the Internet Movie Database and apparently it was released on October 2, 1936 by Columbia Pictures. *Swooner Crooner* is more well-known. It was directed by Frank Tashlin in 1944 and picked up an Academy Award nomination. It depicted Bing and Frank Sinatra as roosters and showed how singers could speed up production on the assembly line when American industry was geared up to boost output during wartime.

Thanks, Bert for alerting us to these issues.

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue

Mike O'Donoghue, Romford, Essex, UK

My wife was recently given a thriller by Mary Higgins Clark to read, ever since then she has been constantly with her nose buried in more books by this popular writer. I casually glanced at the list of some of the titles of her previous novels. Here are some of them: "I'll be seeing you. Remember me. Let me call you sweetheart. Silent night. Moonlight becomes you".

Now is this just a coincidence?

Methinks she may well be one of us!

(Editor: You could be right, Mike. Mary Higgins Clark was born in 1927 in New York to parents of Irish descent. She is of the right age and background to have been brought up on Bing's singing and his films.)

Michael Collins, Florida, USA

I never cease to be amazed at how often Bing's name crops up in the most unlikely places. I have just finished reading George MacDonald Fraser's somewhat dyspeptic memoir, *The Light's on at Signpost*. The title, itself of near Joycean obscurity, apparently has to do with the famous TT motor-cycle race which is held each June on the Isle of Man where the author lived for many years. More specifically, it refers to the light that goes on at Signpost Corner as each rider completes one of the six circuits of the race. The final light, of course, is crucial as it indicates that the rider has finished the last lap and is now only a mile from home.

Using this arcane analogy, Fraser makes the point that he and his peers - nowadays dubbed The Greatest Generation - are soon to leave the world's stage, taking with them a value system which is both misunderstood and barely respected by those they leave behind. He looks around him with dismay and sees the Britain in which he grew up to be changed beyond belief, in its philosophy, in its moral values and in its general outlook. He recognizes but makes no apology for his Colonel Blimpish, right wing, views, accepting the fact that they will be dismissed as the ravings of some weird dinosaur. He sounds as if he cannot get out soon enough.

Although Fraser has some interesting recollections about his time as a scriptwriter in Hollywood, including a number of revealing vignettes of such stars as Steve McQueen, Burt Lancaster and Raquel Welch, much of his book might be described as a sustained diatribe against the modern world, its politics, its shibboleths, its mores. Political correctness is a personal *bete noire*...

None of the foregoing would be relevant except that it paves the way for an even more surprising bend in the road ahead. It so happened that Fraser was involved in a movie which starred Oliver Reed, the nephew of the great Sir Carol Reed. He had a soft spot for this notorious hell-raiser who, in one scene, was chained to the stocks having eggs, vegetables and mud hurled at him. Fraser felt guilty that a moment's typing should have subjected the actor to many long hours under the sun, "trussed up, belabored, and plastered with filth." To his apology, Reed blithely responds: "Bing sings."

Fraser explains in a footnote.

'For those who may wonder what this means, in Bing Crosby musicals the scripts simply noted "Bing sings" - two words representing several minutes of screen time.'

As Bob Hope might have added, "Folks, it's time to go out and get the popcorn!"

Keith Parkinson, St. Helens, Lancashire, UK

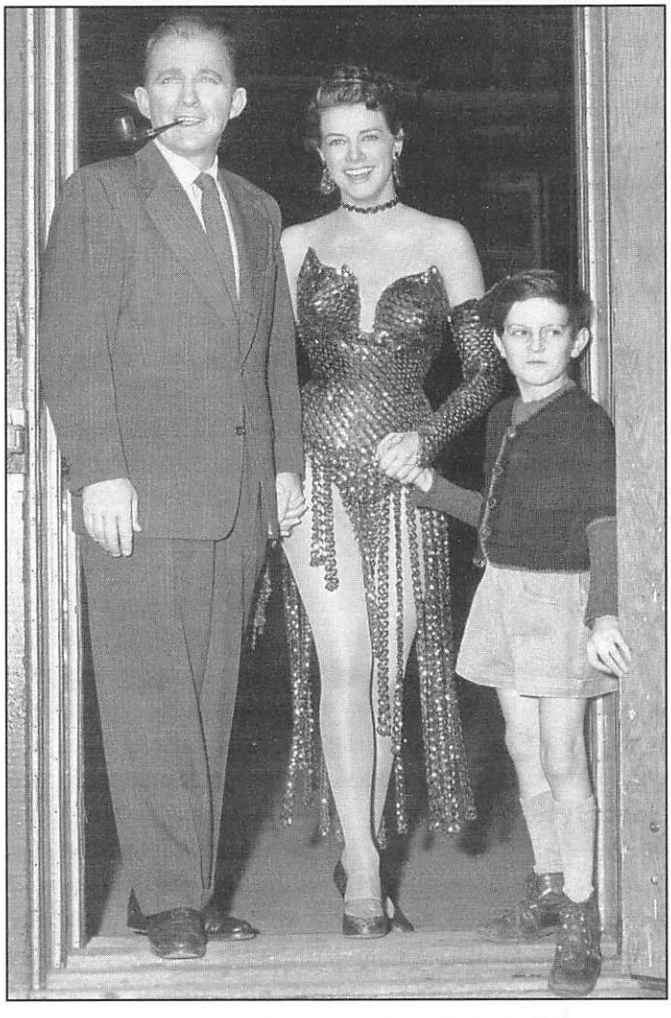
BING 156 was a good read cover to cover but I was

particularly taken by Bob Halls' account of Leeds 2010. He seemed to have captured the spirit of the event and makes me feel slightly guilty at not attending.

Here's a little trivia regarding Rosemary Clooney which may be of interest. The source is an interview given by Arthur Jacobson as part of the Directors Guild of America Oral History series. It took place in 1991 when Jacobson was aged 90. He was asked about the work he did on *Little Boy Lost* where he served as First Assistant Director to George Stevens. He had been talking about Christian Fourcade and went on to say:

> *When we came back here {USA} Bing put him on his radio show and he stole it. They were making a picture at Paramount called "Red Garters", which Rosemary Clooney was in. She sang like a bird and had a figure like nobody's business. This child fell head over heels in love with Rosemary, like only a Frenchman can, at ten years old. I don't think she realized how deep it was, and nothing ever came of it, of course. ."*

I'm not convinced that Fourcade stole the General Electric Show on 4th, December, 1952 but the sketch featuring him with Bing and Rosie centred on him fancying her.



Bing introduces Christian Fourcade to Rosemary on the set of "Here Come the Girls" (not "Red Garters" as stated).

Norman Wolfe, by email from Cumming, Georgia, USA

Congratulations on another fine issue. I have had some publishing experience and have a fair idea of what goes into these things. Sooner you than me.

I note your remark about having to omit some material because you had so much. I think all editors face that problem and one solution, of course, is to shorten the material. Rarely does it suffer. Often is it improved.

Bob Halls presents a very pleasant picture of the Leeds evening but alas sounds a plaintive note, doesn't he? I have never attended one but think it will be sad if they are phased out.

I don't always agree with Richard Baker although mostly I do and I certainly do about "Hey Jude" and "Poor Old Rover". Baker shoudn't feel a need to apologize for not liking a Crosby record.

I thought the Burlingame vignettes were absolutely charming—informal and a genuine portrait of him at that stage of his life. I commend whoever had the idea of reproducing them.

Ron Field, by email from Morton, Washington, USA

Just reading a book called - "A DISTANT MELODY'. Published 2010 - written by Sarah Sundin.

Here's an extract.

> *Riverside - 8/10/42*
>
> *"I couldn't pick if I were her either," Daisy Galloway whispered.....*
>
> *"Bing Crosby or Fred Astaire? Bing Crosby or Fred Astaire? They're both dreamy."*
>
> *....."Oh, Fred. Definitely Fred," Daisy said when his tap-dancing feet set off firecrackers.*
>
> *"Oh, Bing. Definitely Bing," she said when he crooned "White Christmas."*

Alice Kane, by email from Marengo, Illinois, USA

I just received my pre-ordered copy of *A Southern Memoir*, and couldn't be more pleased. I love the bright, happy upbeat orchestral arrangements on these lovely old, old songs that Bing listened to during his childhood, some of which I'd never heard before.

I particularly enjoy listening to Bing's South Texas Quail Hunting Medley, knowing that he made up the (parody) lyrics himself and that this was privately distributed among his friends. I feel quite blessed to have this compilation.

The liner notes are a treasure, and part of the reason is Kathryn's bit of biographical clues to this medley. Nice to know these things as we listen to Bing's own lyrics! It is also nice to find that this album was a pet project of Bing's, something he had wanted to do for a long time. I'm so glad I have it.

All in all, I believe we are all most fortunate that this album has been unearthed and is finally being made available to Bing's many fans.

I look forward to obtaining everything Collector's Choice and HLC Properties makes available in the future. One item I am hoping to see made available is an old television special wherein Bing's walks along singing "Twilight on the Trail", a favorite song of my father's, which he sang to me many times at bedtime when I was a little girl.

Once again I must say how great it is to be in the Club! I love reading the notices of new, upcoming CDs and DVDs to collect. So far I have both of the TV Specials plus the wonderful PBS tribute to Bing. I have most of the CDs from Collector's Choice, including the CBS Radio Recordings from Mosaic. I just ordered 'Bing Sings the Sinatra Songbook', as I have always loved Sinatra's music. Bing is my favorite singer, though.

Keep up the good work with the ICC and BING magazine!

(Editor: "Twilight on the Trail" was in the Bing Crosby show of March 2, 1959. It was included in a 1991 video called "The Magic of Bing Crosby". Let's hope it appears in a DVD soon.)

Tom Bertino, by email from San Rafael, California, USA

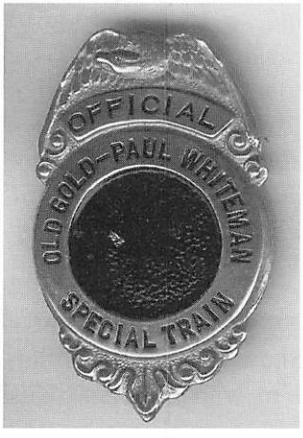
Once again, BING magazine brings delight to my home, and the season. The professionalism and dedication that all bring to the task is very much appreciated in this slap-it-together-and-hope-it-holds world. We're noticing, and are thankful!

It was only in December that I heard of Kathryn's accident, and obviously there was no mention of this in the magazine, what with "due dates," and all. Needless to say, my prayers have been with Kathryn and the family.

Otherwise, it really is, as has been said, the most wonderful time since 1977 to be a Crosby fan! We should all be pleased and proud of the attention and respect that has been given to "our man" lately and, while I'm somewhat late catching up with all of the recent releases, each one I've sampled has been a delight. I was particularly bowled-over by the Mosaic set, which demands one re-evaluate Bing in that era. He is in such fine voice, his singing is so free...he's clearly enjoying himself in the intimate surrounding and in many ways they give some of the best idea of Bing's personal aesthetic, unfettered by any other concerns. Well, I think so, anyway!

Being a chronic packrat, I was naturally drawn to the story about THE JACKET. It got me to thinking: what other "special" items do our members have? What are the stars of their collections? Gang, it would be interesting to hear from you, and to start the ball rolling, I thought I might show you my personal gem (below).

What you see here is the ID badge from the Old Gold-Paul Whiteman Special Train that the band took cross-country to California to make *King of Jazz* (the first time!) These were presumably issued to all band members and entourage. This one happens to be Bing's own, and is the item I was fortunate enough to take away from that San Francisco auction of Bing's effects years ago. It has a clasp pin on the back and is roughly $2^1/_2$ inches top to bottom. It seems Bing didn't have a great deal of memorabilia left from the very early days, and it struck me as somewhat amazing that this had managed to survive. In any case, I thought at least some members would like to know that this is still on the planet, and would be interested in seeing it.



Ladies, gentlemen? Who else is hiding goodies away?

Applause to all you good folks who keep us informed. I look so forward to each issue of the magazine, and the club has come to feel like an alternate family.

Graham Pascoe, by email from Bathurst, NSW, Australia

I've just managed to finish reading BING No. 156 and what a bonzer issue it is. Special thanks to you and Greg as editors and to your contributors. Martin McQuade's contributions are always interesting and, for me, timely because I'd not long beforehand watched *The Eddy Duchin Story* on DVD. Ken Barnes' on 'Those '70s' sessions' gave some wonderful insights supplementing his book.

When I read Keith Parkinson on *We're Not Dressing* I was reminded that it was a popular film in Australia. First shown in Sydney in July 1934 (coincidentally, opening on the same day as *Broadway Thru a Keyhole*) with Russ Columbo), it ran for three weeks, the first Crosby feature film to achieve that. In Melbourne from November, its first run was four weeks, once again doing better than any of Bing's earlier feature films in that city. The film critic of *The Sydney Morning Herald* wrote that it was 'a thoroughly entertaining variety show, perhaps the best [film] in which Mr. Crosby has been presented'. His counterpart at Sydney's *The Sunday Sun and Guardian* was less impressed, writing 'Bing is not at all like a sailor... he croons and he croons. Each time the music begins on a moaning note, you say to yourself "here it is again", and you are right.' At the

time many Australians were unconvinced of the talents of Bing Crosby as a singer and as an actor.

Richard Baker on Bing's "Modern" recordings from 1968 refers to Hey Jude / Hey Bing! and despite Bing's reported dissatisfaction with the album its Aussie release on the London label did reach the local album charts in July 1969, reaching number fifteen.

Last week I went to Melbourne to the first film night of the Crosby Society for 2011. It was beaut to see *Pennies from Heaven* on a big screen in the company of a couple of dozen other enthusiasts. The support was a Danny Kaye selection, taken from his TV appearances, amusing but too long.

By the way, I'm pleased to see the larger photos of you and Ken Crossland in your columns.

Hey Jude, Hey Bing!

Roger Schore of New York also has some thoughts about Richard Baker's article "Bing's 'modern' recordings of 1968" in our last issue.

I enjoyed Richard Baker's close inspection of Bing's 1968 albums, "Thoroughly Modern Bing" and "Hey Jude, Hey Bing!" I've never particularly cared for the former as I found Bugs Bowers' arrangements to be pedestrian and lacking interest, but I've always been a fan of the "Hey Jude" album. Though undoubtedly commercial, I thought the singles and albums that Jimmy Bowen produced for Bing, Sinatra, Martin and Davis were catchy, high-spirited and always fun to listen to. His success in the marketplace in the mid and late sixties and later in the country field is a testament to his skills at reading and successfully catering to the public's taste.

I'm enclosing some copies of things I came across in "Variety" regarding Bing and the Amos label. The one that would hold the most interest, I suppose, is dated July 16, 1969 which claims that Bing had finished recording a second album for Amos. As all the discographies only have the "Goldilocks" recordings from that year, this has to be an error, but I sure would be interested in finding out where this misinformation came from.

Also enclosed is the "Time" magazine article on Bowen which mentions his recording with Bing along with the photo that accompanied the article.

Finally, there are two pages concerning "Hey Jude, Hey Bing" that appeared in Bowen's bio "Rough Mix."

Roger Schore

TIME magazine January 17, 1969

...On the average, only one out of every eleven records hits the charts—meaning the trade magazines' top 100; Jimmy Bowen has a three-out-of-five hit rating. His specialty is lending up-to-the-minute commercial appeal to long-established "household names." In 1964, while producing an album by Dean Martin, he saw possibilities in a little song written 15 years earlier by Martin's pianist, Ken Lane, He released it as a single, and *Everybody Loves Somebody* carried Martin to the top of the bestseller charts for the first time in two years. In 1966, at a Frank Sinatra recording session, Bowen came up with a Bert Kaempfert melody from the soundtrack of the movie *A Man Could Get Killed*. With lyrics added, the song made one of Sinatra' biggest successes of recent years, *Strangers in the Night*.

For Bowen, the key to streamlining performers like Martin and Sinatra is to "change the sound around them, not change their sound." Equally crucial is Bowen's knack for spotting catchy material. "I'm not setting any trends, and I'm sure not trying to follow any," he says. "I look for songs that are simple enough to be hummable after you hear them one time."

The first album on Bowen's Amos label, to be released this month, may be his greatest coup yet. After years of trying, he finally managed to team Bing Crosby with a group of lank-haired back-up musicians in a collection of rock and folk hits—for examples, the Beatles' *Hey Jude* and Judy Collins' *Both Sides Now*.

ROUGH MIX by Jimmy Bowen and Jim Jerome.
Simon & Schuster, New York 1997.
ISBN 0-684-80764-5

...My first two experiences running labels in the seventies were hardly auspicious. The first one proved that being "bankable" meant you could lose lots of *other* people's money as well as a fortune of your own; the second was a lesson in foreign ownership and poor management that convinced me to leave LA and run back to producing music.

When I started Amos Records, I got a half-million dollars from Ampex Tape and a half-million from British Decca for the foreign rights. I also put up close to a million dollars of my own. The deal got a boost when Ampex heard I was interested in recording one of its own early investors—Bing Crosby. I wasn't just being shrewd: I had always wanted to work with Bing, the top-selling crooner of them all.

Bing was pushing seventy and hadn't cut an album in years (sic). Because the big song of 1968 was the Beatles' "Hey Jude," I thought an LP titled *Hey Jude/Hey Bing!* with a cover version would be a trip. (Bing's "White Christmas," cut in 1942, is still the most popular single ever recorded.)

Bing lived along the Pacific in northern California in a big old dusty mansion. When I went there for a song meeting, he led me to a small den that hadn't been disturbed in years. He played me some song ideas on the stereo system, but they all had a corny sound trapped deep in the past. "Bing," I said, "if we're going to sell records we have to make a modern album." Bing hadn't had a non-Christmas hit since "True Love" with Grace Kelly in 1956.

"Okay," he said. "What have you got?"

I played him three recent hits: "Both Sides Now," "Those Were the Days," and "Hey Jude." Bing shrugged, said okay.

Bing then walked us into a vast long-abandoned ballroom so that we could set the vocal keys for our songs on the piano. Dust flew up as we moved across a hardwood floor. The piano probably hadn't been tuned since Roosevelt was president. I couldn't tell what keys we were in. "Well, when would you like to record?" he asked.

"Around two weeks from now, for two days?"

"Good. I'll fly down. I'd like to start at eight o'clock."

"We can do that. We usually start at six, but eight's fine."

"Gee," he said. "Six is a little early. I meant eight in the morning. That's when the *tones* are there, you know."

"Bing, I was thinking eight at night. I don't know if I can *get* a band at eight in the morning." We agreed on nine A. M.

When the day came, I got to the studio at eight-fifty A.M.

"Where you been?" he asked. He'd already been there an hour.

As we started cutting our first track, I heard a noise in the miking or board that was driving me nuts—a weird static I couldn't locate or remove. I stopped and asked my engineer to help me hunt it down. I walked out to Bing's mike stand to check if it was faulty. Standing beside Bing, I heard it dearly and looked down. "Bing, are you jiggling something in your pocket?"

He looked surprised. "Oh, is that causing a problem?"

For five minutes Bing unloaded about $34 in nickels, dimes and quarters from his pants pocket. It was a nervous thing he did and didn't even know it.

We didn't get a hit from the LP, but sold about 50,000 albums. After selling 300 million records, Bing had all the pocket money he needed—plus the $34 we wrapped and shipped back to him after we finished.

(Editor: I had to smile at Jimmy Bowen's experiences as they are so similar to those of Ken Barnes six or seven years later. Ken certainly had the money jiggling problem and he had to record in the morning too.

Greg Van Beek drew our attention to a letter from Bing to John B. Elwood of Jackson, Michigan. In the letter dated May 19, 1969, Bing says:

"Glad you like the "Hey Jude" album. It was quite exciting, working with an orchestra of this type, and I was thrilled by the arrangements. Jimmy Bowen is talking about doing something else, but until I get back from Mexico, where I'm currently with the family, nothing definite will be decided. I'm hopeful it can be worked out, because Jimmy Bowen is a very progressive young man with good ideas, and excellent taste. He seems to have confidence in his ability to cut something by me that will be successful. I personally think he's more adventurous than prudent.

Roger Schore also reminded us that in an article written by Leslie Gaylor in BING magazine back in early 1981 concerning Bing's work on the Amos label, Leslie wrote:

"I do have two letters from the bosses of Amos Records dated 1969 which say that as the 'Hey Jude' album had enjoyed a good sales success Bing had agreed to do two more albums for them. One was to be another album in the "pop" manner, while the second was designated as a Christmas album. The second letter dated August 5, 1969 said that the recording studios had been set aside for the first two weeks of September 1969 for the recording of both these projects."

But on September 8, 1969 Bing wrote to Mr. Elwood again.

"John, I don't know what we're going to do about the album for Jimmy Bowen. He submitted some material but it didn't appear too interesting to me. Maybe he'll come up with something else."

Interesting that Bing came so close to doing more for Jimmy Bowen and Amos Records but the September letter to John Elwood seems to confirm that Bing had not, in fact, made a second album as suggested by Variety on July 16, 1969.)

THE GREAT COUNTRY HITS

Richard Baker has some additional background on this 1963 album.

I have been contacted by Richard Price, who is compiling a discography of Glen Campbell, and he has provided interesting and extensive information about the recording sessions for "Bing Sings the Great Country Hits" which took place on 29th and 31st October 1963. He both expanded on information that we have and corrected one little bit.

He had obtained details of the contracts of the AFM union which showed that all of the musicians were Los Angeles based and from Local 47, except for William Justis, who was the leader and arranger, and one copyist. The arranger and copyist services are billed on the Oct. 31st contract: of those, Mr. Justis and one of the copyists are from Local 257 in Nashville; the other copyist is again from Local 47 in Los Angeles.

There were 3 sessions:

October 29, 1963 9 AM-12:30 PM

Musicians: Glen Campbell, Barney Kessel, Bill Pitman (gtr), Don Bagley (bass), Gene Garf (pno), Ed Hall (dr), Emil Richards (Radocchia) (perc), Robert Barene, Isadore Roman, Ralph Schaeffer, John DeVoogdt, Elliott Fisher, John Vidor, Darrel Terwilliger, Tibor Zelig (vln), Alexander Neiman, Allan Harshman (vla), Hyman Gold, Jesse Ehrlich (cello), William Justis (ldr), Hy Lesnick

(O.M.)

October 31, 1963 9 AM-12 Noon

Musicians: Glen Campbell, Barney Kessel, Bill Pitman (gtr), Don Bagley (bass), Gene Garf (pno), Ed Hall (dr), Emil Richards (Radocchia) (perc), Robert Barene, Isadore Roman, Sidney Sharp, John DeVoogdt, Elliott Fisher, John Vidor, Darrel Terwilliger, Victor Arno (vln), Alexander Neiman, Allan Harshman (vla), Hyman Gold, Jesse Ehrlich (cello), William Justis (ldr), Hy Lesnick (O.M.)

October 31, 1963 1 PM-4:30 PM

Musicians: David Gates, Barney Kessel, Louis Morell (gtr), Don Bagley (bass), Gene Garf (pno), Ed Hall (dr), Emil Richards (Radocchia) (perc), Robert Barene, Sidney Sharp, John DeVoogdt, Darrel Terwilliger, Nathan Ross, Emanuel Moss, Arthur Brown, Joseph Stepansky (vln), Alexander Neiman, Allan Harshman (vla), Hyman Gold, Jesse Ehrlich (cello), William Justis (ldr), Hy Lesnick (O.M.)

The Capitol Session File shows:

Bing Crosby (vo) with Orchestra dir. by Bill Justis. (Session #11540) LA, October 29, 1963
50785 Still - Cap (Int) ST-23063

50786 Wabash Cannonball

50787 A Little Bitty Tear - Cap (Int) ST-23063

50788 Jealous Heart

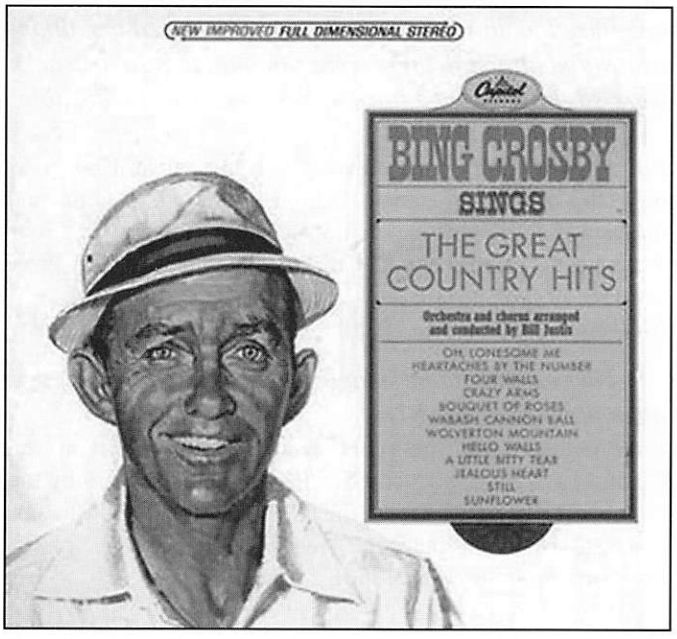
Bing Crosby (vo) with Orchestra dir. by Bill Justis. (Session #11542) LA, October 31, 1963
50795 Four Walls - Cap. SM-11737 (Int) ST-23063
50796 Wolverton Mountain
50797 Hello Walls - (Int) ST-23063
50798 Crazy Arms

Bing Crosby (vo) with Orchestra dir. by Bill Justis. (Session #11543) LA, October 31, 1963
50799 Oh, Lonesome Me
- Cap. SM-11737, (Int) ST-23063
50800 Bouquet Of Roses
50801 Heartaches By The Number
50802 Sunflower

All titles issued on Capitol T/ST 2346, and subsequently on CD by Collector's Choice CCM 221-2.

Glen Campbell plays on the Oct. 29th session plus the first of the Oct. 31st sessions. So Glen played guitar on 8 of the 12 tracks.

Fred Reynolds, in his five volume work "The Crosby Collection 1926-1977" stated that the recording took place in Nashville. I think it is possible that Fred was misled by the fact that Bill Justis was normally based in Nashville and that the record was at one time commonly referred to as Bing's Nashville Album. However, Malcolm Macfarlane knows from research in relation to "Bing Crosby: Day by Day" that Bing had a party at his home in Los Angeles on October 31, so all fits neatly into place.



We have here the presence of several "greats" from outside Bing's usual throng of supporting musicians. Barney Kessel had been well established since the mid 1940s as a leading guitar player and Gibson, the guitar manufacturer, had a model bearing his name. He also wrote books on the guitar.

At the time of the recordings Glen Campbell would have been 26 and had been increasingly in demand as a session musician in LA., where he had been working since 1961, but his big breakthrough came in 1967. So far as I can trace he appeared once more with Bing on 21st December 1968, on TV's "Hollywood Palace" when they sang "1432 Franklin Pike Circle Hero".

David Gates had his big break the following year with "Popsicles and Icicles" which hit #3 on the US Hot 100 for The Murmaids in January 1964. Then came the group "Bread".....

Richard Baker

(Editor: Very interesting information from Richard. I was surprised that he did not go on to review the songs on the album and I challenged him about this. He responded:

> "I'm sure your readers have had enough of my pontifications on performances for the time being. Another attempt by Bing to change course. Not universally popular but rather better than some of the others. And some tracks quite successful, though if Bing is to go western I personally prefer them sung to Bing's usual style of accompaniment - Last Roundup / Santa Fe Trail / Old Cowhand / Twilight On the Trail/ El Rancho Grande.

Just an old traditionalist stick in the mud, me."

The album was recorded in October 1963 as we know but it was not released until late 1965. At the first recording session, Bing was suffering from a cold and you can hear this on some of the tracks. It has been suggested that he was asked to re-record some songs but he refused to do so. Eventually, Capitol issued the album as it stood although there were rumours that some tracks were slightly speeded up. The response was favourable.

For the first time Crosby devotes his vast musical talent to only top country material. Demonstrating his feeling and understanding of lyric in such standouts as the classic "Four Walls" and "Jealous Heart" Crosby maintains his own great style.
(*Billboard*, October 16, 1965)

The Gramophone magazine in the UK had two attempts at reviewing it.
Bing Crosby also turns his eyes Nashvillewards on the Capitol LP T2346 and that too is third rate. "Heartaches by the Number"/"Wolverton Mountain"/"Jealous Heart" and whatnot make easy listening but poor Crosby.
(*The Gramophone*, May 1966)

Bing Crosby is king of the cowboys for me this month with "Bing Crosby sings the Great Country Hits" (World Record Club T833). My preference for Mr. Crosby will probably antagonize the purist adherents of this genre when they notice some of the other names further down this paragraph, but the clear mellow tones are ideal for songs such as "Oh, Lonesome Me," "Wabash Cannon Ball," "Wolverton Mountain," and "A Little Bitty Tear." Even Mr. Crosby cannot do much with lightweight superficialities like "Still," but he also makes everything very agreeable for listening.
(*The Gramophone*, May 1969)
Frank Murphy, writing in BING #2 (April 1966) said:
"Without question, this new Crosby album has raised more comment than any other new release for many a year - never has my mailbag been filled with so much comment devoted to the latest record release...generally the album, except for the comment re Bing having a cold on some of the tracks, is being received with great enthusiasm all round."

Ralph Harding writing in the 'Crosby Collector' was very enthusiastic as always but concerned about the lack of promotion of the album.

So you know what to do. Get the album out and play it! And let me know what you think.

Remember the rare baseball film we described in the last issue? Well, it had its first showing last November and Jenifer Langosch wrote about it for the Major League Baseball site [MLB.com]

Pittsburgh treated to vintage Game 7 screening

Stars come out for game's first viewing since original broadcast

PITTSBURGH—Some came in suits, others donning vintage Pirates apparel. There were those who came with vivid memories of a game—arguably the greatest in Pittsburgh sports history—that was played 50 years ago at Forbes Field. Others arrived with memories that had been crafted simply through the stories that they have been told.

But they all came to relive and to remember and to celebrate. With the unseasonably warm weather a fitting tease, there was, indeed, a baseball game to be played in Pittsburgh on Saturday night.

Approximately 1,000 people packed the downtown Byham Theater to be among the first to view one of baseball's greatest World Series games since the day it was played. A copy of the NBC telecast of Game 7 of the 1960 World Series between the Pirates and Yankees was unveiled by MLB Network less than a year after being discovered in the wine cellar of Bing Crosby's home.

MLB Network will air the game in its entirety for the first time in 50 years at 8 p.m. ET on Dec. 15. But as host Bob Costas noted in his opening remarks, "We thought it was only fitting to premiere this here in Pittsburgh."

Eight former Pirates who played in that Series—Joe Christopher, Elroy Face, Bob Friend, Dick Groat, Vernon Law, Bob Oldis, Hal Smith and Bill Virdon—were in attendance on Saturday night. So, too, was Vera Clemente, the widow of Hall of Famer Roberto Clemente, and former Yankees infielder Bobby Richardson.

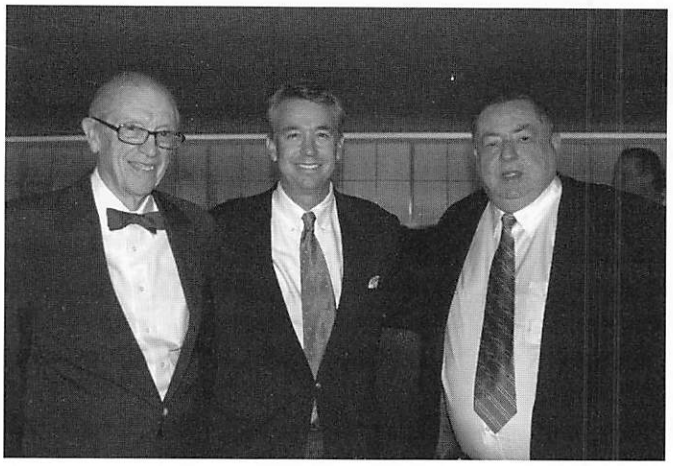
"Thank God for Bing Crosby," Groat said, shortly before the viewing. "It's going to be something special, especially with Bob Prince and Mel Allen doing all the commentary. That makes all the difference in the world, because they were two of the greatest announcers ever."

The most prominent missing face was that of Bill Mazeroski, who was slated to sit on stage with Costas during the broadcast. However, Mazeroski was admitted to the hospital earlier in the week after passing kidney stones, and was unable to attend.

"I'm sorry he's not here," Friend said. "He's been a great one. He would have enjoyed this very much."

The current Pirates management team was represented by owner Bob Nutting and president Frank Coonelly. Former Steeler Franco Harris—whose immaculate reception rivals Mazeroski's home run as the greatest sports moment in the city's history—came for the evening, too.

There were other notable guests, as well. Crosby's youngest son, Nathaniel, sat in the audience alongside actor and Pittsburgh native Michael Keaton, and Robert Bader, the archivist who discovered the original kinescope. Keaton provided a stirring introduction in which he recalled coming home from Pittsburgh's St. Malachy school to have his brother tell him that his favorite team had just won the World Series.



Wig Wiggins and Ken Gray (right) were amongst those who represented the ICC at the event and Judy Schmid's camera captured them with Nathaniel Crosby during the evening.

"It was the first time I experienced anything that was an event," said Keaton, who was 9 years old at the time.

Shortly after Keaton relived his memories from 1960, so, too, did Costas. Eight years old and living in New York, Costas' allegiance was on the other side. He provided a convincing-enough argument that his parents allowed him to skip school that day to watch the afternoon game.

As for the ending?

"That was the first time I remember being heartbroken," Costas recalled.

The black-and-white film—which had no commercials, no replays and no fancy graphics—lasted just over two hours. Fans watched the game as if they didn't know what was happening, seemingly breathing with every pitch. There were cheers and jeers and chants, clapping and timely standing ovations.

The film was paused periodically throughout for Costas to talk with some of the special guests in attendance. ...There were touching moments, too. Nearly every time Roberto Clemente was shown on the broadcast, the crowd erupted in applause. Such continued adoration drew an emotional response from Vera Clemente.

"This was our second home," said Clemente, who didn't meet her future husband until after the 1960 World Series. "I'm very happy to be back. That's something that's very special."

Another poignant moment came in the bottom of the eighth, shortly after Smith pushed Pittsburgh in front of New York, 9-7, with a two-out, three-run homer.

Allen's words echoed from the screen: "That's one of the most dramatic home runs ever hit in the World Series. That base hit will long be remembered."

Smith's homer has been mostly forgotten because of the one that followed an inning later. On this night, though, it wouldn't be forgotten.

When Smith stood up to recognize the applause, the entire audience rose to its feet and gave him a standing ovation.

"I had no idea what happened until I hit second base and saw fans jumping on the dugout," Smith said. "No matter what happened after that, I was just glad to help Pittsburgh."

Of course, Mazeroski's walk-off homer drew the night's loudest cheers. And it was Prince's postgame interview show—one in which he somehow shuffled through more than a dozen interviews in only minutes—that drew the most laughs.

It didn't matter that everyone knew the ending before the night started. It was the chance to see the check swings, the balls that went foul by inches, the game-changing plays in the middle innings that were so captivating. It was finally a night for Pittsburghers to match the stories they had repeatedly been told with reality.

"It was really something we all wanted to see," Friend said. "It's one of the greatest games ever played in the history of baseball."

Jenifer Langosch

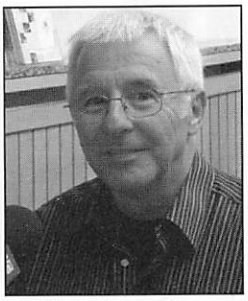
UMG Wants Bing Crosby's Widow's Company Enjoined from Selling Christmas Album

The Courthouse News Service on March 2 reported:

LOS ANGELES (CN) - UMG Recordings claims HLC Properties, "a partnership controlled by Crosby's second wife, Kathryn Crosby," violated a 1943 agreement giving Decca/Universal Music Group exclusive rights to Crosby's Christmas songs, including "White Christmas." UMG claims that HLC has "clear knowledge of the re-recording restrictions in the 1943 agreement," but released its Christmas album anyway, containing some of Crosby's most popular songs, including "Adeste Fidelis," "The Christmas Song," "Silent Night," and other chestnuts... UMG says HLC breached contract and breached faith and fair dealing by releasing its own, competing version of the Christmas tunes. It wants distribution of HLC's "The Crosby Christmas Sessions" enjoined, and damages. It is represented in Superior Court by Steven Marenberg with Irell & Manella. Kathryn Crosby is not named as a party.

(Editor: Seems like a strange claim. Kathryn and her family must be so tired of this legal wrangling.)

BING ON THE BOX



Malcolm Macfarlane surveys the TV and radio scene of the last four months.

TV highlights

USA & Canada

A splendid selection of Bing's films has been seen on TV since our last issue was prepared, including:

A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court	TCM
Angels in the Outfield	TCM
Blue Skies	TCM
Emperor Waltz	TCM
Going My Way	TCM
High Society	TCM
High Time	Fox Movie Channel
Holiday Inn	AMC
Let's Make Love	Fox Movie Channel
My Favorite Brunette	TCM
Road to Morocco	TCM
Road to Singapore	TCM
Robin and the Seven Hoods	TCM
Say One for Me	Fox Movie Channel
White Christmas	AMC

Bing serenades Joan Fontaine in "Emperor Waltz"

TCM have again done us proud and the Fox Movie Channel (FMC) is starting to make an impact too screening the fairly rare *Say One for Me*. TCM was also advertising the 'White Christmas" DVD and also the new six pack DVD of Bing's films during November.

Ron Field reporting having seen a small piece on TCM called "The Cinematographer" which was a 1951 behind-the-scenes look at the responsibilities of the cinematographer. Various scenes were shown but probably the longest cut was of Bing and Bob in *Road to Rio* doing their Latin-American number with Bob dressed like Carmen Miranda.

Another item on TCM was their excellent *Moguls & Movie Stars* series and part 4 was called *Brother, Can You Spare a Dream?: 1929-1941*. Bing's biographer Gary Giddins appeared in this chapter talking about Bing's huge popularity in films as reflected in his success at the box office. Bing was singled out as the most successful of radio personalities who went into the movies.

As mentioned earlier in this issue, the MLB Network showed the long lost baseball film in December and this included interviews with Kathryn and Nathaniel, as well as some ball players. It also had a short biography of Bing as well.

USA Radio

Mary Crosby and Robert Bader were heard on *Doug McIntyre's Red Eye Radio* on December 7. This program goes out in the early hours of the morning and is heard all over the USA and on the Internet. I listened to a Podcast a day or two later and by mistake listened to some of the Podcast from the December 6 broadcast. Doug McIntyre trailered Mary's forthcoming appearance playing "White Christmas" and the Buddy Cole backed "Don't Get Around Much Anymore". This produced a caller phoning in with questions about Bing's first marriage and led Doug to state that Dixie was a terrible alcoholic. The Gary Crosby book allegations were then raised but happily Doug was able to add balance by saying that Phillip Crosby disputed Gary's allegations. I suppose that's the trouble with phone-ins and they obviously need careful handling which Doug more or less did for most of the conversation.

The next day's Podcast opened with "White Christmas" and Mr. McIntyre, when introducing Mary and Robert Bader, stated that he was an unabashed Crosby nut. Doug said that Bing was No. 1 in everything for ten years. He asked Mary about Christmas in the

Bing Crosby house and Mary replied that they had wonderful family Christmases and with the recording of Bing's Christmas show in November they virtually had two celebrations. The Crosby children got to leave school for ten days and have their teeth braces off.

Doug McIntyre mentioned Kathryn Crosby's dreadful accident and Mary indicated that her mother was doing great and recovering.

Pointing out that the early Crosby was a jazz singer, he brought Robert Bader in to the conversation and Robert agreed that it was so. Robert stated that Bing re-embraced jazz stuff in the 1950s singing with a small jazz quartet which gave Robert the opportunity to plug the many new releases from the Crosby archive.

The radio host reminded his listeners that Bing and Louis helped breakdown color barriers by working together and Mary told the story of how Bing fought the studio to get Louis billing in *Pennies from Heaven*. Doug said that Bing was one of the great duet singers and was incredibly generous to other singers in duets, probably because he had nothing to prove. McIntyre wanted to know if Bing still had his competitive fire during Mary's childhood. Mary thought probably not but Bing still thought it important to maintain his standards. He was essentially truthful in whatever he did, she said.

During the program, we heard extracts from several Bing records – "Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive" – "Alexander's Ragtime Band" (with Al Jolson) – the Bing 'N' Bowie song – Now You Has Jazz (with Joe Bushkin) and "Sugar" (with Louis – Mary was heard to say "I love this song"). The forthcoming Paley Center tribute was highlighted as was Robert Bader's trip to Spokane for the festival at the Bing Crosby Theater.

In discussing the new releases, the conversation turned to songs such as "Anthem of the Clams" which led Robert to describe how Bing would do these special records, adding that Bing was "a terrific lyricist." Mary felt that the Road films invented buddy pictures and then the phone calls started. The first caller was "Rich" who said that at one time he had been Kathryn's escort and played golf with Bing and Bob. Also that Bing had dated his mother in Fanchon & Marco days. It sounded interesting but the conversation seemed to be cut short so perhaps it was not a genuine caller. After some other calls, Doug described how Peter Falk had said that he owed his career as "Columbo" to Bing as Mr. Crosby had turned down the role. Mary had not heard the story before although Robert had.

Naturally the rare Baseball film was mentioned and this led Robert Bader to inform us that he has found recordings of two 1955 and 1956 benefit shows Bing did to raise funds for a hospital. We had only outline details of these in the past. The first in 1955 was at Church Falls in Northern California and the second took place on September 16, 1956. Starting at 1 p.m., Bing, Phil Harris, and Alice Faye performed in the Crosby-Harris Show at the Inter-Mountain Fair Grounds at McArthur, Northern California. The show was a benefit for Mayers' Memorial Hospital. Buddy Cole provided the music. It will be great to hear these shows in due course if Robert can get them issued.

All in all, this was a very worthwhile interview with Mary and Robert and they both came over well.

Bing Crosby Christmas Radio

Sirius XM Radio and Bing Crosby Enterprises joined together again in December for "Bing Crosby Christmas Radio," an entire channel devoted to classic radio broadcasts from Bing's personal vault. Using the same material as previous years, the channel ran nonstop on Sirius channel 113 and XM channel 118 from December 20 to December 26 and featured Bing's holiday radio shows from 1942-1962, brimming with special celebrity guests, musical numbers and variety show performances. The shows were hosted by the Crosby family—wife Kathryn, daughter Mary and sons Nathaniel and Harry. The family shared personal anecdotes and memories about these vintage broadcasts as they introduced them to listeners. Great moments from these classic shows included Bing and his guests—some of the biggest stars of the time such as Rosemary Clooney, Frank Sinatra, Judy Garland, Bob Hope, Ella Fitzgerald, Peggy Lee, Johnny Mercer, The Andrews Sisters Jimmy Stewart, Edgar Bergen and his daughter, a young Candice Bergen—singing together, doing skits and celebrating the holidays. Classic radio programs on "Bing Crosby Christmas Radio" included "Christmas Sing with Bing," "The Bing Crosby Show," and "Philco Radio Time" and "Kraft Music Hall."

Bing and Louis

The Riverwalk Jazz program from Public Radio International (www.pri.org) on January 20 featured Gary Giddins discussing the links between Bing and Louis. Gary has of course written books about both men.

The web page about the program stated:

> 1930 was a breakout year for both artists, and they were both in Los Angeles heating up the club scene. Bing had left Whiteman and was in his debut run at the Cocoanut Grove, while Armstrong was appearing at Frank Sebastian's Cotton Club just down the street from MGM's Hollywood studios. Both gigs were broadcast live via remote hookup.
>
> The friendship between Bing and Louis deepened during this period. Louis later wrote, "Every night between their outfit and our outfit, we used to burn up the air, every night...Yea, Bing and Gus Arnheim & Co. would broadcast first every night and leave the ether wave sizzling hot. Just right for us when we would burst on in there from the Cotton Club. Oh, it was lots of fun. The same listeners would catch both programs before going to bed."

Gary spoke in his usual fluent fashion and he finished with these words:

"...If you're lucky enough...see the television performances they did together, especially on the *Hollywood Palace* where Bing puts his arms around him and they walk off into this long shadow together, and you feel like, it brings me almost to tears, these two amazing men walking back into the shadow of history who've really invented the music that we all love."

Arne Fogel's long-running Saturday night radio program "The Bing Shift" is still heard on KBEM-FM "JAZZ 88" (88.5 FM) in Minneapolis & St. Paul, MN. and it can be heard internationally, via the KBEM-JAZZ 88 website.

Greg Van Beek continues to be busy and on December 22nd from 8:30 am to 9:30 am (CST), he was in the WTKM radio studio presenting his 9th annual Bing Crosby Christmas Special. He has also continued to present monthly nostalgia specials on WJUB 1420 AM "The Breeze" in Plymouth, WI, and these can be heard over the Net too.

Incidentally if you have difficulty in finding radio stations on the Internet that play Bing, a suggestion by **Len Livett** may help you. Go to www.live365.com and enter Bing Crosby in the find slot (top right) and this should bring up a number of links to stations that feature Bing at some stage or other. One to look out for is Rich Conaty's long-running "The Big Broadcast" from New York which puts a musical spotlight on the classic sounds of the 1920s and '30s. It's heard on Sunday nights from 8pm-Midnight and you can listen again through the WFUV archives.

TV highlights - UK

The documentary *The Legendary Bing Crosby* which was featured in the USA on PBS last year popped up on the fringe *Sky Arts* channel in the UK on Christmas Day and Boxing Day several times. It was hardly advertised and I knew nothing about it until ICC member **Mark Spry** told me about it some days afterwards. Pity, because I could have circulated our members by phone, email and put an entry on Crosby Fan World. However, the good news that it is now available on demand and on line through Sky Player. This is a very interesting development.

See http://skyplayer.sky.com/aboutskyplayer/ for more details.

Bing has also been seen on the small screen as follows since last time:

High Society	TCM & Channel 5
Road to Morocco	Sky Classics
Road to Singapore	Sky Classics
Road to Utopia	Sky Classics
Road to Zanzibar	Sky Classics
Son of Paleface	Sky Classics
Stagecoach	Sky Classics
The Greatest Show on Earth	Sky Classics / Film4
White Christmas	Sky Classics & HD

Bert Bishop continues to keep his eyes open for Bing mentions on the box and he reports:

"Last night *(i.e December 1)* on *The One Show* [BBC] contributing participants were asked what their favourite Christmas films were. The chap that does 'Foody Friday' [can't recall his name] opted for *White Christmas* and two clips were shown: the 'Snow' scene on the railway journey and the grand finale with the song."

UK radio

Ken Crossland

Our own Ken Crossland was heard being interviewed by **Harry King** on BBC Radio Cumbria on November 8. Members will recall that Harry came along to our Leeds meeting a year or two back and interviewed a number of us. The segment this time lasted for thirty minutes and Harry quizzed Ken about the "flood of new Crosby material" with a particular focus on the Mosaic set. Ken explained that the Crosby family had realized that they needed to do more to promote Bing and Ken thought that they may have been influenced by the success of the Sinatra family's efforts. We were quickly into songs from the Mosaic set with "Keepin' out of Mischief Now" and then Ken went on to describe how Robert Bader had uncovered much material from Bing's wine cellar including the rare baseball film we described in our last issue.

Harry asked what kind of shape Bing was in artistically speaking in the mid 1950s and Ken explained that his priorities had changed by that time and he was picking and choosing projects that appealed to him more. He was singing for the love of singing when he recorded the tracks heard on the Mosaic set. Bing's voice was in fantastic shape with that beautiful brown tone at its peak. The questions to Ken were interspersed with more tracks from the set – "Manhattan", "Young and Foolish" and "I Get a Kick out of You".

Ken indicated that Bing was a rhythm singer — you wouldn't find the dramatic effects of a Sinatra recording and you would not hear the extended exaggerated notes of a Tony Bennett performance from him. This led into Bing's version of "My Funny Valentine" with Ken going on to talk about Bing's fantastic ear for music.

Ken was asked if there was any Crosby item he still wanted to obtain and was told that the 78 of "I've Got the Girl" was something Ken still craved. In response to being asked to pick a favourite from the Mosaic set, Ken said that all the songs were great but he selected "Love is a Many Splendoured Thing" for the listeners' delight. Ken wound up this most interesting session by stating that talent endures and that people hearing Bing for the first time will be saying "Wow, this guy was a great singer." They would recognize that he was a real jazz singer and a superb interpreter of popular music. He did not just sing 'White Christmas', "this guy was the best."

Overall, this was an excellent broadcast and Ken did a wonderful job for us.

The National Presenters

Pride of place this time must go to **Russell Davies**

who celebrates the art of songwriters in his BBC Radio2 show on Sunday evenings. He ran a competition to find everyone's favourite duet and when he launched it with "Gone Fishin'" on October 24, he said that he could run a survey of duets on Bing Crosby records alone. A short list was drawn up over the following weeks and listeners were encouraged to vote. The results were announced just before Christmas and were:

1) Bing Crosby & Frank Sinatra - Well, Did You Evah! - (32%)
2) Ray Charles & Betty Carter - Baby It's Cold Outside - (13%)
3) Bob Hope & Shirley Ross - Thanks For The Memory - (12%)
4) Louis Armstrong & Ella Fitzgerald - Can't We Be Friends? - (11%)
5) Frank & Nancy Sinatra - Somethin' Stupid - (10%)
6) Bobby Darin & Johnny Mercer - Two of a Kind - (9%)
7) Brook Benton & Dinah Washington - A Rockin' Good Way (6%)
8) Perry Como & Eddie Fisher - Maybe -13 (3%)
9) Dean Martin & Line Renaud - Relax-Ay-Voo (2%)
10) Rosemary Clooney & Marlene Dietrich - Good For Nothin' (1%)

Great to see our man on top and by a huge margin! Russell commented, "It's only right for a Bing Crosby duet to triumph because nobody devoted more ingenuity to the craft and activity of duet singing than Crosby did."

Russell had played "Well Did You Evah!" in the early stages of the competition and apart from the singing, he said how much he liked the business in the background in the film, the champagne cork being elbowed back in, etc.

Bing and Frank rehearse their "Well, Did You Evah!" number

Amongst other items played during the period by the erudite Mr. Davies was "It Was the Dawn of Love" with Russell commenting that he was grateful for the testosterone introduced by Bing compared with the other vocalists on the track. Russell was especially impressed by Bing's whistling on the record as well.

The latest Crosby Sepia release was mentioned on the January 9 broadcast leading Russell to play "If There's Anybody Here" with Bing dueting with Donald O'Connor. Russell read from my notes about how O'Connor missed appearing in *White Christmas* because of an infection picked up from Frances the Talking Mule and this gave the presenter an excuse to play several songs about mules, including "Swinging on a Star". It's amazing how many there are and I wonder if any other animal has more songs about it? Perhaps dogs and horses might come close. Mr. Davies also chairs the Radio 4 programme "Brain of Britain" and he told us that this was being recorded in the Maida Vale studio which still has a plaque on the wall commemorating Bing's last recording date.

The death of noted jazz discographer Brian Rust led into the playing of "Because My Baby Don't Mean Maybe Now" because it was one of Mr. Rust's favourites. Russell plays Bing very regularly but nevertheless ICC member **Colin Stewart** took him to task as follows:

> "Enjoyed the show as always especially the Darryl Sherman and Marlene VerPlanck songs and news of their forthcoming visits here. However can't believe that having chosen 1931 as the theme and even running through that list of the successful songs of the year, nearly all of which Bing had recorded and several of them made into his great hits, that you did not play one Crosby recording from that year!"

Russell duly replied on his web site:

> "Bing gets a good run over the year, better than almost anyone else and we did mention him in reference to 1931. But you're right, of course: It was, perhaps, his finest year, too."

And on February 20, Russell acknowledged the matter again saying that a number of people had mentioned it. He then played the 1931 version of "Where the Blue of the Night" in order to put things right. Well done Russell!

Clare Teal, who follows Russell on Sundays, occasionally fits in a Bing song amongst her Dance Band and Big Band items. She gave us "A Little Bird Told Me" (1948 Philco, Crosby brothers & Peggy Lee) and "Jingle Bells" (played on December 19).

The final hour on Sunday nights is taken by **David Jacobs** and he played a nice selection including "A Time to Be Jolly" in December. "Under Paris Skies" was another comparative rarity played by Mr. Jacobs.

In our last issue, we noted the lack of Bing on **Desmond Carrington's** Friday night show and this time he has used our man more often with the "Last Round

Up", "Memories", "Ask Me No Questions" and "Moonlight Becomes You" ("mirage" soundtrack version). In January and February, Mr. Carrington hosted a separate six-part series called "Icons of the 50s" on Tuesday nights on BBC Radio2 and Bing was heard with "Well Did You Evah."

The daily weekday Radio2 presenters usually only play Bing around Christmas time and so it was that we heard Ken Bruce playing "White Christmas" following a request from the ever-dependable Stan White.

The local presenters

Anne Hopper at BBC Radio Cumbria (and on the Internet) takes the first position in this section as in the four months from October to January, she played 40 Bing songs on her fast-moving Sunday afternoon request show. The legendary "Bing on the Box" award is hers again this time. The songs broadcast varied from "A Perfect Day" (played in honour of our Leeds meeting), to the rare "Moonlight on a White Picket Fence" and "Jim, Johnny and Jonas" plus radio songs such as "Enjoy Yourself" (with Bob Crosby) and "The Bold Fisherman" (with Humphrey Bogart). The variety of Bing tracks used by Anne continues to astound me! Originally from Kent, Anne trained in theatre and film and went on to join BBC Radio Cumbria in late 1988. She did many jobs before presenting the afternoon programme in her final years as a staff member prior to retirement. Now a freelance, Anne packs her Sunday afternoon show with music from the 1940's and '50's. She has a wide musical knowledge and her younger colleagues joke that she remembers the songs first time round (trouble is - she does!). There is a listen again feature if you can't listen live. Just Google "Anne Hopper Radio Cumbria" to access this. It's a great show and well worth a listen. Please help Anne to keep up her good work by sending her requests by email to anne.hopper@bbc.co.uk

Bill Rennells hosts *Harmony Nights* which is heard on BBC local radio stations throughout the South East of England and on the Internet for three hours starting at 10 p.m. on Sunday evenings. Bill is often assisted by his wife, Angela, but she was missing in Australia for a while during the period we are reviewing. This is also a request show and you can email Bill at bill.rennells@bbc.co.uk. Bill played a very creditable 25 Bing records during the four-month period and he was encouraged by a good number of requests from our stalwarts in the area, Trevor Wagstaff, Ian Lawrence and the legendary "Stan from Rothwell" - Stan White. Bill had a request for Bing to sing "Guardian Angel" and he called your editor for confirmation that Bing had not recorded such a song. Mr. Rennells guessed that the listener probably wanted to hear "True Love" in which the phrase "guardian angel" is used so that was what he played. Around Christmas, Bing's seasonal favourites were well in demand and Trevor and Pat Wagstaff got in first with "White Christmas" and Stan soon followed with a request for the Bing and Bryn Terfel duet of the same song. Bill used "Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams" (1954) from 'Through the Years' vol. 6 too and it's always good to hear the Sepia issues being employed.

"The Late Paul Barnes", the big band and jazz oriented show hosted by **Paul Barnes** continues to be heard over seven BBC local radio stations and on the Internet at 11 p.m. on Saturday nights. Paul takes a look at the Crosby Calendar during his first broadcast of each month and in November he noticed that the song of the month was the 1945 version of "Temptation". He commented that there was some perversity going on as the accompanying photograph was from *Going Hollywood* (1933). Paul said that he preferred the 1933 version of "Temptation" and that's what he played. Moving on to January, Paul was struggling with a bad cold, but he was impressed with the quality of the photo of Bing and Edward G. Robinson we used. He mentioned that we send him the magazine and our summary of what he plays. In reviewing the February calendar, Paul described the photo of Joan Caulfield and Bing in their operating kit and he wondered whether Bing would have been able to perform delicate surgery with the thick gloves he appeared to be wearing!

Apart from his monthly look at the calendar, Mr. Barnes plays plenty of other Bing tracks and he focussed on duets for several weeks. He started off with what he felt was one of best duets of all time – "Gone Fishin'" – and he also picked up "I Still Suits Me" (with Peggy Lee), "On a Slow Boat to China" (also with Miss Lee), "Be-Bop Spoken Here" (with Patty Andrews), "Small Fry" (with Johnny Mercer), "Between 18th and 19th on Chestnut St." (with Connee Boswell – a Stan White request) and "Your Socks Don't Match" (with Louis Jordan).

Paul gave us the sad news that **Peter Morton**, a veteran BBC Radio Northampton broadcaster who often featured Bing, had passed away on November 1st at the age of 83. Peter was known as "Dr. Swing" and Paul mentioned that Peter had been the proud owner of a v-disc of Bing singing "Small Fry" with Tommy Dorsey and as a tribute Paul duly played the track for us.

Songs from the Sepia CDs have been used by Paul but discussing the 'Le Bing' tracks on Sepia 5, Paul thought they were sung in rather poor French. Because of this, he did not want to use them so he played "What a Little Moonlight Can Do" instead. He realised that he might have trodden on a few toes by saying this but he said that this was something he has to do now and then in the interests of honesty. No argument from us, Paul! Ken Crossland said something similar when reviewing the CD for the magazine. However, as the original LP cover said: "Any persons who dare to find fault with Bing's French accent are advised to send their complaints to the United Nations."

At this point, I should like to give long overdue thanks to Stan White for his work over many years

faithfully recording the Bing songs from Radio2 and from the Bill Rennells and Paul Barnes shows and sending me cassettes containing them all. It's a labour of love for Stan and it's been very much appreciated by first Bert Bishop and now me.

Radio Lincolnshire's **Howard Leader** features Bing frequently on his Sunday afternoon show. A wide variety was heard this time around varying from "When My Dreamboat Comes Home" to "Bye Bye Blues" (with Satchmo). Howard played a couple of tracks from Sepia 5 but "A Propos De Rien" confused him and he said that he hadn't understood a word. Well that's fair enough because it was meant to be a nonsense song when it was used in the *Little Boy Lost* film. Howard played "Anything You Can Do" with Bing and the Andrews Sisters but the record he was holding did not give details of the other singer and he wondered who it was. The following week Mr. Leader was duly given the answer "Dick Haymes" in an email from a listener called Shane. John James of Northborough in Cambridgeshire kindly tapes Howard's show each week and sends a cassette to Stan White who dubs off the Bing content and passes it to me with the songs from the shows he records. Marvellous how all these things work!

West Country based **David Lowe** still has his 2-hour "Swingers and Singers" show on Sunday nights at 8 p.m. This is heard on eight BBC local radio stations from Gloucestershire to the Channel Islands and of course on the Internet (look for Radio Devon). Plenty of Bing as well as many others from our kind of music. There is a 'Listen Again' feature too for seven days after the original broadcast.

Mike Carey at Radio Derby likes to play Bing regularly on his Sunday afternoon *Melodies with Mike Carey* programme but he could do with more requests to mike.carey@bbc.co.uk. He did play the Bing and Peter Lorre skit from Bing's Philco Show of November 12, 1947 on his Halloween show though and this is something which is seldom heard on the air.

Our own **John Walton** is now presenting the 'Through Noon' show on Lincoln City Radio on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. It starts at 11 and goes through till 2 and can be heard on the Internet at www.lincolncityradio.com/. He plays as much Bing and other crooners as he can get away with. The station is getting a gradually increasing band of loyal listeners on FM in the Lincoln city catchment area which has between 30 and 40 thousand people over the age of 50. The station policy is for a wide range of music up to 1980 with more modern stuff thrown in if it fits.

Australia

Graham Pascoe tells me that *The Legendary Bing Crosby* documentary was shown on the Biography channel in Australia in February. The same month the Ovation channel showed the South Bank Show special on Bing which was first seen in the UK in December 1999 with the title "The Voice of the Century". Nice to think this excellent documentary is still popping up here and there.

Radio station 2CH in Sydney broadcast another Bing special on January 1 on Bob Rogers' *Reminiscing* programme which can be heard on the Internet as well as in Australia. The Mosaic set was used frequently and the songs played were:

I Get Ideas - Mountain Greenery - Moonglow - In The Still of the Night / I Could Have Danced All Night - I Wish You Love – Don't Blame Me - Straight Down the Middle - Sometimes I'm Happy - I Can't Get Started - You Do Something to Me - My Own True Love - Love Me or Leave Me - Carolina in the Morning – 'S Wonderful - I Want to Be Happy - Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White - I'll Never Say "Never Again" Again

As mentioned previously, on Sunday evenings 2CH has a regular Elvis hour and a Sinatra hour, but not a Bing hour. Some encouragement from some Bing fans might help get Bing a regular slot. See the station's website at: http://www.2ch.com/ for contact details.

Ken Boness and Lance Gardam, on behalf of the Australian Bing Crosby Society, broadcast for two hours on Eastern FM 98.1 each Friday. Their programme is called "The Melody Lingers On with Bing Crosby & Friends" and can now be heard in many parts of Australia by satellite. If you would like a request played, email Ken and Lance at:

themelodylingerson1@gmail.com

For a bit of fun, I emailed a request for "Young at Heart" from the latest Sepia CD and not only was it played but they sent me a CD-R of the December 7 programme. Mine was the first request they had received from England. The show I heard contained six Bing tracks including the lengthy "The Small One".

Malcolm Macfarlane

Once In A While

Personalities associated with Bing who have died since our last issue was prepared include:

Blake Edwards the film director who died on December 15 aged 88, was best known for his series of Pink Panther films, starring Peter Sellers, and for *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961). Films such as *A Shot in the Dark, The Return of the Pink Panther* and *The Pink Panther Strikes Again* assured Edwards's place as a maker of cult films and allowed him the financial freedom to undertake later projects such as *10* and *S.O.B*, both of which he wrote. But despite his many successes, he was not immune to box office disasters. The musical spy thriller *Darling Lili*, which starred Edwards's wife, Julie Andrews, cost almost $20 million to make and failed dramatically at the box office; his

later, ill-advised decision to release another two Pink Panther films (after Sellers's death) exposed him to acrimonious, and expensive, court cases brought by the actor's widow. Blake Edwards was also the Director of Bing's gentle and under-rated comedy *High Time* (1960).

BING goes to college with a BANG!
BING CROSBY
FABIAN
TUESDAY WELD
NICOLE MAUREY
From Cha-Cha to Rah-Rah... From bonfires to hayrides... It's the high time of your lifetime!
HIGH TIME
CINEMASCOPE
COLOR by DE LUXE
CHARLES BRACKETT · BLAKE EDWARDS · TOM WALDMAN & FRANK WALDMAN · GARSON KANIN

He had entered Hollywood as an actor in *Ten Gentlemen from West Point* (1942). In the following decade he gained a reputation as a screenwriter of lightweight comedies such a *Rainbow Round My Shoulder* (1952) and *Operation Mad Ball* (1957). He created the successful television series *Peter Gunn* which was propelled to success in part by its catchy theme tune by Henry Mancini. He then got what he described as his "big break" with the naval comedy *Operation Petticoat* (1959), starring Cary Grant as the commander of a pink submarine. He turned producer-director for the *Pink Panther* series. His son from his first marriage, Geoffrey Edwards, was once married to Denise Crosby, Bing's granddaughter.

Lina Romay died on December 17 at the age of 91. Born Maria Elena Romay in New York, she was the daughter of Porfirio A. Romay, attaché of the Mexican Consulate of Los Angeles. Romay began her career in the early 1940s as the lead singer of the Xavier Cugat Orchestra and landed her big break after performing with the band in Fred Astaire's 1942 film *You Were Never Lovelier*. The role led to Romay pursuing fame as an actress in a dozen or so feature films and in many TV projects, including stints on the *Milton Berle Show* and the *Red Skelton Show*. She bowed out of showbusiness in the late 1950s. Her involvement with Bing began on March 7, 1946 when she sang on the Kraft Music Hall and she followed this by appearing on seven Philco shows in 1946-47 singing duets of "South America, Take It Away" and "La Borrachita" with him. Lina Romay worked as a Spanish language radio announcer for horse races from 1970s to 1980s at Hollywood Park Racetrack.

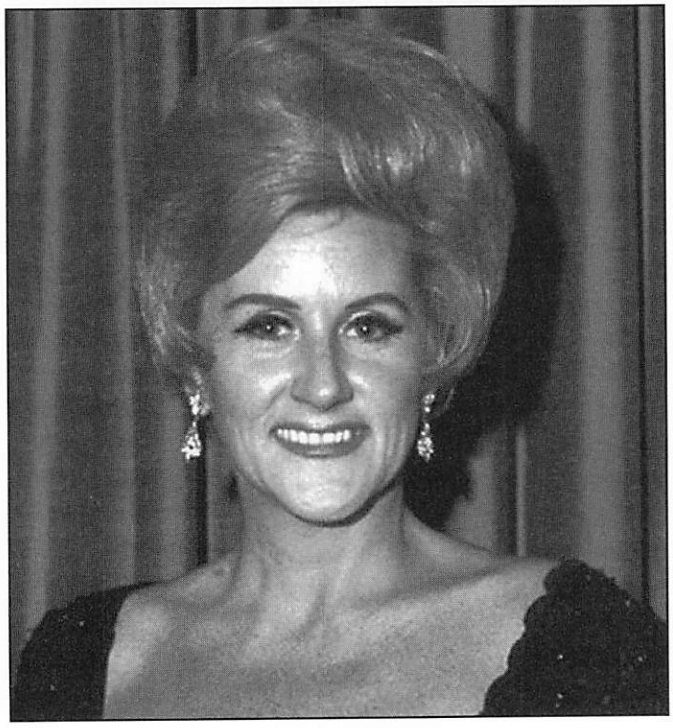
Margaret Whiting, a songwriter's daughter who as a bright-eyed teenage singer captivated wartime America and then went on to a long, acclaimed career recording hit songs and performing in nightclubs and on television, died on January 10 in Englewood, N.J. She was 86.

Beginning in the '40s, she turned out a string of hit records, became a fixture on radio, appeared on television in the '50s and later embarked on a successful nightclub career, touring as late as the 1990s and occasionally venturing into musical theatre.

It was her association with the lyricist Johnny Mercer that most defined Ms. Whiting's career. Mercer was writing songs for the movies with Ms. Whiting's father, the popular-song composer Richard A. Whiting, when young Margaret sang for him one night at the family home in Beverly Hills, Calif. She was just 6.

"I came down in my nightgown," she told *The New York Times*, "sang two songs and went up to bed."

It would become a lasting friendship. After Mr. Whiting died of a heart attack in 1938 at the height of his popularity, Mercer became a surrogate father of sorts to 13-year-old Margaret, personally overseeing her budding career and signing her immediately after he helped found Capitol Records in 1942. He once told her, "I have two words for you: grow up."



Margaret Whiting

At 18 she recorded the Harold Arlen-Johnny Mercer song "That Old Black Magic" with the bandleader Freddie Slack. The next year it was "Moonlight in Vermont" with the trumpeter Billy Butterfield and his band, followed in 1945 by "It Might as Well Be Spring," with Paul Weston. That song became a signature for her. There were more hits, among them "Come Rain or Come Shine," another Mercer-Arlen song. In 1948 alone Ms. Whiting had three major hits: "A Tree in the Meadow," "Now Is the Hour" and "Far Away Places." A duet with Mercer, "Baby, It's Cold Outside" lasted 19 weeks on the Billboard chart in 1949. Her nine duets with the country star Jimmy Wakely, from 1949 to 1951, were very popular, particularly "Slippin' Around." She released albums into the late 1950s with Capitol Records, then switched to the Dot and Verve labels, but returned to Capitol and recorded her last hit, "The Wheel of Hurt," in 1966.

Her younger sister, Barbara, who died in 2004, also became an entertainer, and together they starred in "Those Whiting Girls," a 1950s television series about college coeds.

Ms. Whiting had an early love affair with the actor John Garfield, and her first three marriages ended in divorce. In her later years, Ms. Whiting was known to many as the unlikely wife of Jack Wrangler (originally John Stillman), a star of gay pornographic films in the 1970s who went on to become a cabaret and theater producer.

Her friend and mentor, Mercer, died in 1976. But he remained in her thoughts and the subject of stories she told for years afterward. "He was a perfect Southern gentleman until he had three Scotches and two sips," she once said.

Surprisingly, Bing never worked with Margaret although he did have her sister, Barbara, on his Chesterfield show in January 1950. Margaret is however included here because she played a prominent part in the conference "Bing Crosby and American Culture" at Hofstra University in November 2002. Not only did she entertain us at the gala banquet but she was also in the separate tribute to Rosemary Clooney (with whom she worked in *4 Girls 4*) and "The Songwriters and Bing Crosby" session when she picked out "My Ideal" as her favourite Bing song. Bing did not make a record of this although he did sing it on radio. She also liked his version of "I Can't Escape from You". Both songs were, of course, written by her father! Margaret went on to say that Bing could have sung a cook book or dictionary and made it attractive. She felt that Bing was "the finest singer we have ever had in America." As previously mentioned, Margaret worked closely with Johnny Mercer and she said that Mercer constantly talked about Bing.

Sir George Shearing, the Anglo-American jazz pianist, died on February 14 at the age of 91. Blind from birth, he began his career in London before moving to the US in 1947 and becoming one of the best known jazz pianists of the post-war era. Made an OBE in 1996 and knighted in 2007, he was renowned for his unusual "locked hands" style of playing. Sir George played for three US presidents as well as the Queen and led his own quintet for decades. The original George Shearing Quintet formed in 1949 and had a modest hit that year with "September in the Rain". In 1952 he wrote "Lullaby of Birdland", an ode to the famous New York jazz club named after legendary saxophonist Charlie "Bird" Parker. George David Weiss added the lyrics. Sir George would later admit he composed it in 10 minutes. "But I always tell people, it took me 10 minutes and 35 years in the business," he said in 1980. Nat King Cole, Sarah Vaughan, Mel Tormé and Peggy Lee were among the many music stars with whom he worked. He crossed paths with Bing only rarely although he did appear on Bing's TV special on September 29, 1959 taking part in an excellent piano medley. Also, he was in the audience when Bing put on a concert in San Francisco in June 1976. Sir George was still performing into his 80s but suffered a serious fall in 2004 that led to months in hospital and subsequent nursing home care.

GORD ATKINSON'S 'THE CROSBY YEARS'

The Club Crosby in Canada

In one of my previous *Crosby Years'* columns I reminisced back to the beginning of my association with *The Club Crosby* and its founding members. I fondly remembered their tireless devotion to Bing's legacy and the friendships we shared. Sadly in recent years we have lost exceptional supporters of the International Club Crosby. Happily, however, several of our original colleagues are still active, enthusiastic members. The bond that we have shared through the years has circumvented the globe and brought us together as an international family of Crosby collectors.

Now, we come together (from far and wide) to celebrate our 75th anniversary as a world-wide club that continues to honour Bing's memory and celebrate his life and times.

The following essay that I wrote at the beginning of the 21st century seems even more relevant today for inclusion in this 75th anniversary edition of *BING*:

"As a fallow young fellow, an impressionable teenager, I was captivated by the manner and style of the incomparable Bing. That was over sixty years ago when I became a collector of Crosbyana and a lifelong fan. Since then, there has not been a time when I have not been aware of his influence on my life and career.

My musical appreciation, from jazz to light classics, was expanded by listening to Bing's superb recordings. His sense of humour and engaging personality on radio and on the screen had a profound effect on my own

disposition and identity.

Like many others who were attracted to show business, he was my mentor. As our friendship developed, our association encouraged me to pursue a career in broadcasting. My first position in the entertainment world was in my home town, Toronto, as a writer-publicist with the Compo Company. At the time that I joined their staff in 1947 they were the Canadian distributors of Decca Records.

During that same period I had taken on the position of president of the Canadian branch of *Club Crosby*. In this role I found myself at odds with a policy of my new employer. It was a ruling that by today's business methods and radio programming seems ludicrous. Compo officials felt justified in preventing radio stations from playing Decca records. They were convinced that if people could hear their recordings on the radio, they would not go out and buy them. It was apparent to everyone else in the industry that air play would stimulate sales.

Frustrated at not being able to hear Bing's Decca discs on local radio, I wrote to him and his brother-manager, Everett, explaining the broadcast ban. They were in agreement that it should be lifted and assured me that they would have no objections to Crosby records being broadcast.

With their encouragement I contacted the Compo policy makers and requested permission to begin a 30-minute program of selections from Bing's vast Decca library. To my surprise and delight they agreed, but only for a once-a-week show, reserving the right (for the time being) not to lift the ban for general air play. Encouraged by my fellow Crosby fans, I approached the most listened-to radio station in Canada, CFRB-Toronto. Despite my obvious broadcast deficiencies they accepted my proposed program and services.

Bing was very supportive and sent me recorded greetings and all his latest releases. We would on occasion do telephone interviews. Before long it was decided that the ratings were so good that once a month we would expand our format and invite listeners to attend these special broadcasts. The audiences included listeners of all ages and all backgrounds. Never before or since that time, has any entertainer had such broad and universal appeal. A limited number of tickets were issued and everyone in attendance was given a fan club pin and a membership card. We also went on location to cinemas where new Crosby movies were having their Canadian premieres.

The show remained on the air for seven years, from 1948-1955, broadcast from both Toronto and Ottawa. At the time that we began broadcasting, magnetic tape was not in general use and the only means of recording was on expensive cylindrical discs. While the radio station did record one of the shows to send to Bing, the cost of recording was well beyond my meagre budget. For years thereafter I thought all my old programs were lost in time and space. However, for whatever reason (and without my knowledge), someone had recorded one of the shows. To my amazement I was informed several years ago that it had miraculously crossed the Atlantic and ended up in an old radio collection in Dublin, Ireland. My good friend and Crosby sleuth "par excellence", Malcolm Macfarlane, purchased a copy and gave it to me as one of the most surprising gifts of my life.

Gord holding a scroll signed by hundreds of "Club Crosby" members during the Canadian premiere of "Road to Bali" at Shea's Theatre, Toronto. The scroll was sent on to Bing.

It was with trepidation that I listened to the program and heard a youthful broadcaster whose voice sounded like it was running at high speed. I felt like I was in the "twilight zone". One of my earliest performances from 1949 had come back to haunt me. However, despite my inadequacy as an apprentice broadcaster, that vintage program brought back a wave of nostalgia with memories of old friends and happy times."

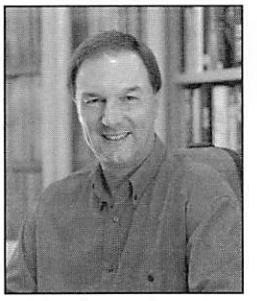
Gord Atkinson

(Editor: Gord exemplifies the vast amount of work put in by ICC members over 75 years to promote Bing. Our gratitude goes to Gord for all he has done for the last 60 years on behalf of our Mr. Crosby and our thanks are also due to Gord's long-suffering, but ever supportive, wife, Elaine.

Gord's wonderful radio series, "The Crosby Years" remains available -- see Trading Post for details.)

KEEPING TRACK

Ken Crossland looks at the new releases



Ken Crossland takes a look at the new releases.

Where do you start? Boxed sets of rare movies and TV shows on DVD, eight new CD collections and virtually all of it from unissued master tapes that just ooze with quality. If ever there was a Bingfest, the time is now! Before I dig into the individual releases, I think a word of praise and thanks is due to Messrs Bader and Brodka, and the Bing Crosby Enterprises team. They will doubtless have discovered the impossibility of pleasing all the people, all the time and not everyone will praise every single release. But when you stand back and look at the material they have put on the market in the last 18 months, together with the imaginative and highly professional way it has been packaged, no-one can deny that they have done Mr. Crosby proud. So well done to all concerned and 'keep 'em coming!

COMPACT DISCS

Bing Crosby and the Kraft Music Hall – Rare Original Survivors ICC UK/USA £5 /$10 (both postpaid)

1. Paul Whiteman introduces Bing 2. Please/Learn to Croon/June in January/From the Top of Your Head 3. On Treasure Island 4. Red Sails in the Sunset (reconstruction – includes opening from the commercial recording) 5. You (Gee! But You're Wonderful) 6. I'm Building up to an Awful Let Down 7. Take My Heart 8. If I Should Lose You 9. But Where Are You? 10. Moonrise on the Lowlands 11. Moon over Miami 12. All My Life 13. Roll Along Prairie Moon 14. Lost 15. One Night in Monte Carlo 16. West Wind 17. Desire 18. Say the Word and It's Yours 19. Everything's in Rhythm with My Heart 20. Some of These Days 21. Let's Call a Heart a Heart 22. So Do I 23. Long Ago and Far Away 24. On the Beach at Waikiki 25. South Sea Island Magic 26. Twilight on the Trail 27. With All My Heart 28. Bing's closing

Before I look at the new BCE releases, I think it only right that I give pride of place to a new club release, put together by David Currington and Rod Poynter in Australia, which celebrates two 75th anniversaries that come around this year. The first is our own birthday as a club – the longest running 'fan' club ever – and the second is the start of Bing's tenure at the Kraft Music Hall. This release features all but one of the songs from Bing's debut, which actually came in December 1935, plus a selection of rare items from shows throughout 1936. John Scott Trotter was the man who recorded most of Bing on KMH, but he did not arrive until 1937. These recordings survive because Bob Burns, he of the infamous 'Bazooka' (pictured in the sleeve notes) rigged up some recordings of his own performances that by chance caught some of Bing's too. That does not account for the survival of the first show, from December 1935, so if anyone knows that story, please share it with us. Sound quality is very clear – remarkably so, given the age and primitive nature of the recording equipment used. American readers should get copies from Wig.

The Crosby Christmas Sessions Collectors' Choice USA $12.98 UK £11.99 (Amazon)

1. It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas 2. Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer (with Ella Fitzgerald) 3. Just What I Wanted for Christmas 4. Jingle Bells (1960) 5. Christmas Carol Medley: Deck the Halls with Boughs of Holly/Away in a Manger/O Little Town of Bethlehem/The First Noel 6. Adeste Fideles (1952) 7. Here Comes Santa Claus (with Peggy Lee) 8. The White World of Winter 9. The Secret of Christmas (1959) 10. Go Tell It on the Mountain (with Frank Sinatra) 11. White Christmas (1952) 12. It's Christmas Time Again 13. The Christmas Song (1952) 14. Silver Bells (with Ella Fitzgerald) 15. Jingle Bells [Fast Version – 1952)] 16. Sleigh Ride 17. We Wish You the Merriest (with Frank Sinatra) 18. Silent Night (1952) 19. The Little Drummer Boy/Peace on Earth (with David Bowie)

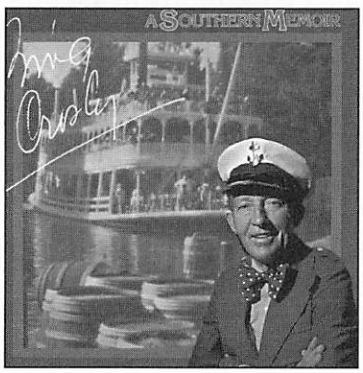
Little Drummer Boy/Peace on Earth/White Christmas (with Ella Fitzgerald) (7" Vinyl) Collectors' Choice USA $8 UK £7:00 (Amazon)

This CD collection, along with a 7" vinyl (whoever thought we would get a new one of them?) appeared in the run up to Christmas, along with the American Songbook item that follows. I have to confess a slight sense of disappointment with the Christmas Sessions, because most of the content is radio material rather than from commercial sessions. Not that the material is in any way deficient, but with the Shout release some years back and

the perennial attractiveness of Christmas material, I'm left with a sense of not getting that much "new" from this release. There are exceptions. The two 1959 recordings of "The Secret of Christmas" and "Just What I Wanted for Christmas" are great to have (one in stereo, one mono, which is odd since they were recorded together). A stereo copy of "White World of Winter" has been very rare but here it is and the other standout item for me is the "slow" version of "Jingle Bells" from the 1960 "A Christmas Sing With Bing". The Bowie duet of course is a perennial and arguably now does as much as "White Christmas" to keep Bing's name alive.

Bing Sings the Great American Songbook Collectors' Choice USA $12.98 UK £11.99 (Amazon)
1. I Want to Be Happy 2. Manhattan 3. S'Wonderful 4. Ol' Man River 5. You Took Advantage of Me 6. Button up Your Overcoat 7. I've Got a Crush on You 8. You Do Something to Me 9. I Guess I'll Have to Change My Plan 10. Get Happy 11. Please Don't Talk about Me When I'm Gone 12. Anything Goes 13. What Is There to Say? 14. I Feel A Song Comin' On 15. Cheek to Cheek 16. The Nearness of You 17. How About You? 18. Don't Get Around Much Anymore 19. That Old Black Magic 20. Almost Like Being in Love
I have voiced my opinion before about releases that seem to exploit the loyal collectors and "Bing Sings the Great American Songbook" is another example, I'm sad to say. Of the 20 tracks here, 16 appeared on the Mosaic set, for which some of us paid over $100. To ask us to buy them again in order to obtain the four new releases here is shameful. OK, those of us who are into downloads could use that method just to buy the four tracks but the true collectors have no option but to buy a CD, 80% of which we have only recently purchased. Sermon over, this is a great collection, with Bing working his way through a catalogue of great songs, many of which he never got around to in the Decca studios. The "new" tracks by the way are numbers 11, 18, 19 and 20. All twenty tracks feature Bing with Buddy Cole from their Fifties sessions for CBS. Quality is superb. Great cover drawing too.

A Southern Memoir Collectors' Choice Music USA $12.98 UK £19.99 (Amazon)



1. On the Alamo 2. Alabamy Bound 3. Where the Morning Glories Grow 4. Stars Fell on Alabama 5. Carolina in the Morning 6. Swanee 7. Way Down Yonder in New Orleans 8. Georgia on My Mind 9. Cryin' for the Carolines 10. She Is the Sunshine of Virginia 11. Sleepy Time Down South 12. Sailing Down the Chesapeake Bay 13. Bing's South Texas Quail Hunting Medley: Galway Bay/Mack the Knife/The Surrey with the Fringe on Top/The Pleasure of Your Company (parodies) 14. On the Alamo* 15. Alabamy Bound* 16. Stars Fell on Alabama* 17. Swanee* 18. Georgia on My Mind (original LP edit) 19. Sleepy Time Down South* (*alternate versions)
On now to the post Christmas releases. As a UK resident, I had not realized that "A Southern Memoir" had never had a US release. I remember its appearance in the UK because the LP was very badly pressed. I returned at least three copies to my record store, only to be told that the distortion I heard was because these were "old recordings." Pointing out that the sleeve notes demonstrated that these were new recordings, I was told that was "just publicity. Bing Crosby doesn't make records any more"! 35 years later, we finally can hear the sessions from January 1975 in their full glory. And what glory! With this CD mastered direct from the master tapes, the sound quality is simply stunning, as near as you could ever get to being in the same room as Bing. What's more, we have several alternate takes here, including a very interesting, slower treatment of "Stars Fell on Alabama." This was a disc that Bing financed himself and the enjoyment he gets from his singing leaps out through the speakers. Play it alongside the Mosaic tracks and you have the same sensation of Bing singing purely for the love of it. And how well he sings. When you can hear it in this quality, the power, range and tone of a seventy-plus voice is simply remarkable. The only oddity is the inclusion of a private medley that Bing recorded at one of the two sessions for his hunting buddies. It's great fun –and Bing sounds in perhaps the best voice of all on that track – but apart from its recording date, it has nothing in common with the other material. It might have been better suited to the "So Rare" collection rather than turning up here. But never mind. If you only buy one of these CD, buy this one. Great notes from member, Arne Fogel by the way.

The Crosby-Clooney Radio Sessions Collector's Choice USA $19.98 UK £34.99 (Amazon)
Disc 1: 1. The Merry-Go-Run-Around 2. Takes Two to Tango 3. Chicago Style (version 1) 4. Open up Your Heart (with Bob Hope) 5. South Rampart Street Parade 6. Something to Remember You By (version 1) 7. You're Just in Love (version 1) 8. It's Only a Paper Moon 9. Chicago Style (version 2) 10. Easter Parade (version 1) 11. People Will Say We're in Love (version1) 12. Only Forever 13. Medley: These Foolish Things/We Just Couldn't Say Goodbye (version1)/You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To (version 1) (fluff) 14. You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To (version 2 -medley pickup) 15. We Just Couldn't Say Goodbye (version 2) 16. These Foolish Things 17. You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To (version 3) 18. That's Amore 19. The Little Brown Jug 20. Sweet Genevieve 21. Shine On Harvest Moon (version 1) 22. Buckle Down Winsocki 23. Indian Summer 24. Something to Remember You By

(version 2) 25. You're Just in Love (version 2) 26. Easter Parade (version 2) 27. Man (Uh-Huh) and Woman (Uh-Huh) 28. Lily of Laguna 29. Ford Jingle # 1 30. Ford Jingle # 2

Disc 2: 1. Will You Still Be Mine 2. People Will Say We're in Love (version2) 3. We Just Couldn't Say Goodbye (version 3) 4. I May Be Wrong 5. Would You Like to Take a Walk 6. They Can't Take That Away from Me 7. You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To 8. Something to Remember You By (version 3) 9. Let's Call the Whole Thing Off 10. Ain't We Got Fun 11. Isn't This a Lovely Day 12. Let's Put out the Lights and Go to Sleep 13. They Say It's Wonderful 14. Shine on Harvest Moon (version 2) 15. Let's Take a Walk Around the Block 16. Don't Worry About Tomorrow 17. Hey, Look Me Over 18. Anything You Can Do 19. What Takes My Fancy 20. Summertime 21. True Love 22. Medley: It's Been a Long Long Time/Life Is Just a Bowl of Cherries/Gimme a Little Kiss 23. Medley: Moon over Miami/Meet Me Tonight in Dreamland/There's a Long Long Trail 24. Goodnight My Someone 25. Medley: September Song/As Time Goes By/ Till We Meet Again 26. Medley: Any Town Is Paris When You're Young/ Paris in the Spring/ April in Paris/The Last Time I Saw Paris 27. Singin' in the Rain 28. Bing Crosby & Rosemary Clooney Sing for Eastern Products (part 1) 29. You're in Kentucky Sure As You're Born (Rosemary Clooney solo) 30. Bing Crosby & Rosemary Clooney Sing for Eastern Products (part 2) 31. This Ole House (Bing Crosby solo)

A timely release for someone, in tandem with our editor, engaged currently on writing a biography of Rosemary. These tracks were all recorded for radio, essentially in two tranches. The first disc (apart from the two Ford jingles at the end) features material that was recorded for Bing's GE radio show between 1952 and 1954. By this time, Bing and his team were in production mode for the radio shows, recording the songs exactly as they would record a commercial disc and then editing and splicing them between dialogue recorded at other times. What that means is that this set gives us a set of studio recordings that were used for radio. They are in essence, session tapes, complete with little asides at the beginning and end of tracks. Disc 2 then skips on four years for eight songs from 1958 for "The Ford Road Show" (Bing, Buddy etc) and a final batch from 1961 for "The Crosby-Clooney Show". One extra little gem is the clever inclusion of Bing's solo on "This Ole House", a Clooney hit of course and which finds a good home here. Great to have it and just a shame that Bing's very humorous outtake just drops the wrong side of the censor's line for its inclusion. Sadly, the set is one song short of giving us the complete Bing & Rosie on radio. Prior to the GE shows, Rosie made one appearance with Bing on Chesterfield in June 1952 and the pair duetted on "Zing A Little Zong", which is not included here. However, if you have the Clooney Jasmine "Something to Remember Me By" release – 1997, I see! – you will find it there.

Bing Crosby Sings the Sinatra Songbook Collectors' Choice USA $10.98 UK £19.99 (Amazon)

1. The Lady Is a Tramp 2. Young at Heart 3. Too Marvellous for Words 4. April in Paris 5. I Get a Kick out of You 6. Imagination 7. Witchcraft 8. High Hopes 9. Where or When 10. Crosby & Sinatra Medley: Among My Souvenirs/September Song/As Time Goes 12. Chicago 13. The Tender Trap 14. All the Way 15. Love and Marriage 16. You Go to My Head 17. It Happened in Monterey 18. South of the Border 19. Summer Wind (2010 Remix)

If anybody can hear a loud whirring noise at this point, the sound is that of our former UK editor, Reg Bristo, spinning in his grave. Reg's point would have been that masters do not put out tributes to their apprentices. Robin Hood didn't sing the Little John songbook, Reg would have said. I have some sympathy with that view, particularly when some of the songs here were clearly Bing's from the off. One only needs to consider "Too Marvellous for Words" - Bing 1937 – and "Where or When" and "South of the Border", both featured early in the Kraft years before anyone had heard of Sinatra. So, this is a rather contrived release but if you can get over that uncomfortable feeling, there is some good stuff here. Mostly, it's a mixture of GE and CBS tracks, the exceptions being "High Hopes" (a very welcome alternate take from the 1968 "Thoroughly Modern Bing" album – a thoroughly awful set of recordings, but still nice to have an alternate), "South of the Border" (from Longines 1965) and "Summer Wind", lifted here from the recent revamp of "Seasons" (but still featuring Bing's voice out of center and flattened – and my belated thanks to our member Bob Conrad on New Jersey who was the first to spot the strange remastering that went on with the new release of "Seasons.") Most interest, I guess, is held by the songs that genuinely sit with Sinatra –the Cahn & Van Heusen items such as "Love and Marriage" and "All the Way", plus titles such as "Witchcraft" and "Lady Is a Tramp". These were songs very written for Sinatra of the Fifties and Bing's somewhat casual, intuitive readings of them don't quite work, except perhaps for "All the Way" which is a Crosby gem. Never mind. Buy it.

With All My Heart - Shall We Dance
(Both from Apple iTunes Store under licence from Bing Crosby Enterprises – Worldwide $12/£8 each)

With All My Heart: 1. Magic Moments 2. Secret Love 3. I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart 4. Chances Are 5. Catch a Falling Star 6. Night and Day 7. Hello Young Lovers 8. With All My Heart 9. Born to Be with You 10. Some

Enchanted Evening 11. How High the Moon 12. Misty 13. I Love Paris 14. And the Angels Sing 15. P.S. I Love You 16. Video: I Love Paris (from *The Bing Crosby Show*, broadcast January 3, 1954)

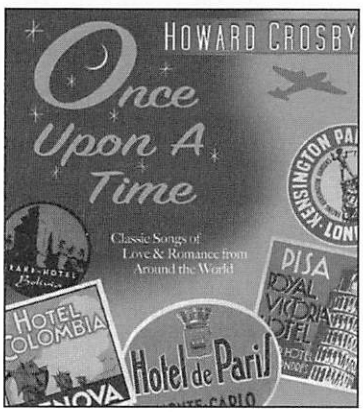
Shall We Dance: 1. Begin the Beguine 2. Puttin' on the Ritz 3. Don't Let the Stars Get in Your Eyes 4. I Can't Give You Anything But Love 5. It's Not for Me to Say 6. Dark Moon 7. Changing Partners 8. Do Nothing Till You Hear from Me 9. Zing Went the Strings of My Heart 10. Way Down Yonder in New Orleans 11. Keep It Gay 12. The Gypsy in My Soul 13. Granada 14. Lady of Spain 15. Doin' the Bing 16. Video: Doin' the Bing (from *The Bing Crosby Show for Clairol*, broadcast December 24, 1962)

Finally, we come to two more collections, not available on CD and accessible only by download from the Apple iTunes store. It's a sign of the times, folks. From the previous batch of releases, the Bing-Bowie duet, as a download, was by far the most popular release. The great thing about these two collections is that they do not repeat anything on previous releases. Once again they combine GE and CBS material. What's interesting about that is the fact that Bing went straight from his GE contract in 1954 to the sessions with Buddy Cole for CBS. Much of the GE and CBS material was recorded within a year or 18 months of each other, but it sounds like they are 10 years apart. The Crosby voice is constant but the GE material is classic John Scott Trotter – pleasant, unobtrusive backings that must have sounded old fashioned the day they were done. The CBS stuff, with Buddy Cole's vibrant little band, sounds fresh and modern.

A couple of nice videos also arrive in your inbox when you buy these sets on iTunes, one from 1954 TV and the innovative "Doin' the Bing" from the 1962 Christmas show (see DVDs below). Highlight tracks have to be the covers of Como's "Magic Moments" and "Catch a Falling Star", although as with the Sinatra's 50s songs, I'm not sure they suited Bing that well. Once more of course, these recordings come direct from the masters rather than from the radio show tapes. That not only gives us better quality but it also offers the odd alternate, when compared to the versions used on air. In the "With All My Heart" set, "Secret Love" is a different version to the one broadcast on many occasions on GE, "With All My Heart" is a longer version than some of the versions heard on the Ford Road Show and "Born to Be with You" has Bing whistling (badly) in the middle, which was probably edited out of the broadcast version. On "Shall We Dance", "Zing! Went the Strings of My Heart" and "Keep It Gay" are different to the broadcast versions.

Whilst on the subject of iTunes collections, you might also want to explore these that have recently appeared:

B is for Bing Crosby, a collection of Decca commercial sides and airchecks
An Evening With Bing Crosby – 19 Decca tracks
Various Christmas collections



In passing, I ought to point out that Bing's nephew, Howard Crosby, has a new CD out. Called "Once Upon a Time", Howard has put together a collection of his favourite songs. Most of them leave his Crosby heritage some way away, although the set does include songs that Bing sang, including "Danny Boy" and "Solamente Una Vez". There are covers of hits from Perry Como, Nat King Cole and others, although the stand out track is probably "Wind Beneath My Wings" which Howard does with just piano support. This is a pleasant CD, with some excellent musicianship evident. Howard's singing is very much like his cousins from Bing's first family - pleasant and in tune, although he would probably be the first to admit that he did not inherit the rare "X-factor" gene. It's available from Amazon.com at $16.

DVDs

The Bing Crosby Collection – College Humor / We're Not Dressing / Here Is My Heart / Mississippi / Sing You Sinners / Welcome Stranger - Universal Backlot Series USA - $35

This set of six Crosby films is the most significant release since the "Screen Legends" box set of five movies a year or two back. This time, the films are arguably even rarer, especially *College Humor* and *Here Is My Heart*. The latter two titles are also especially welcome, and whilst copies of *Dressing* and *Mississippi* have been relatively easy to access, it is truly marvellous to have them as part of this set. Quality of the prints on all six films is good, especially *Here Is My Heart* and *Sing You Sinners*. Four of the six feature Bing pre-1935 when the famous Crosby film character was still taking shape and primarily in these early movies, Bing was there to sing and not do much else. To be able to see him at that early stage of his career in such beautiful quality is a delight. Okay, the films themselves are dated – *Here Is My Heart* in the bits between the songs is truly awful, but they were made 75 years ago. Forget

the plots – just enjoy the songs. The discs by the way are Region 1 so if you are outside the USA, you will need a DVD player that can play multi-region discs.

Waikiki Wedding / We're Not Dressing / Here Come the Waves – Amazon USA $15
These three films are already available in boxed sets, but can now be purchased individually by US members via Amazon's "on-demand" service, whereby a DVD-R disc is created for each individual order. The releases are part of Amazon's deal with Universal Studios and the three Crosby films are part of a batch of 15 individual movies released early in 2011.

Bing Crosby: The Television Specials Volume 2:
The Christmas Specials Collectors' Choice USA $23.96 UK £14.99 (Amazon)
A companion release to the CD series, this of course if the second volume of TV shows to escape from the Crosby cellar. There are four main shows, dating from 1961 in England, 1962 (the first overt Christmas special), 1971 and Bing's final show, shown posthumously at Christmas 1977. Bonus material includes selections from Bing's 1957 guest shot with Frank Sinatra at Christmas, outtakes from the 1962 shows, a Toys for Tots public service broadcast and a 1976 film, *Bing's Britain.*

This is a most welcome follow up to Volume 1 that appeared last year. The film quality of all four shows is excellent, and whilst the London show from 1961 is black and white, the sharpness of the print is outstanding. Even better, the audio quality is top notch. There are some wonderful video moments in these shows – Bing singing "My Fate Is in Your Hands" from 1961, a colour shot of Bing's "I Left My Heart In San Francisco" from the show with Mary Martin a year later (and some great alternates of the "Sun Shines Nellie" duet from there) and then some real gems from the 1971 show with Robert Goulet. Wonderful!

Other than those, and in no particular order, look out too for .....

The colour version of *Holiday Inn*. Now available to UK and European readers in Region 2 format as part of a two-disc set that also includes the original black & white and a short film about how the colour version was made. Available from Amazon at £8.49.
Yet another *Bob Hope Collection* gives us five Hope movies, including Roads to Bali and Rio. Region 1 only, available from Amazon USA at around $30.
An Andy Williams release of *My Favorite Duets* includes Bing from his guest spot on Andy's TV show in 1966. Available from Amazon USA at around $17. Most of us have this material on previous Andy Williams' compilations.
Impressionist Rich Little's 1975-76 TV series is now available in its entirety on a box set available from Amazon USA at around $25. It includes Bing's guest spot on the show in April 1976.
Michael Feinstein's American Songbook series for PBS in the States – broadcast last year – is now available on DVD, including an extra disc that has Bing from 1944 singing two songs from *Swingtime with The Stars* ("Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive" and "Don't Fence Me In"). The series itself ran for three one-hour programs. Not shown (yet!) in the UK, but the reviews were excellent – there is no better authority on American popular music history than Michael.

What's on the Web?

Space precludes a lengthy web trawl, other than this item. "Bing Crosby & Fred Astaire: A Couple of Song & Dance Men Outtakes" said the heading on eBay, with the following description:

> "1 CD+ 1 Quarter inch 7inch reel tape Original box, One DAT Tape. This recording was made in Studio One at CTS studios between 10 am until 1pm on Thursday the 17th of July 1975. The tape was left in record to a quarter inch machine at 7 1/2 ips. It is an unedited recording of the session with chatter from Bing and Fred and the changes being made with the live orchestra. This tape captures the moment-by-moment magic of that morning.
>
> There were originally 3, 7inch reels, 2 were copied to DAT and the third was not available for copy at the time, so remains in its original form. Unfortunately the other two tapes were destroyed once the DAT was made. The DAT has now been transferred to CD. This is the only copy in the world of that session recorded that morning. There were songs taken from this session and remixed for the finished album, but this is just as it happened, you will hear the rehearsals, the chatter, and the mistakes as if you were on the session yourself."

Price? Bids to start at $999. There were no bidders!
Happy listening!
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